





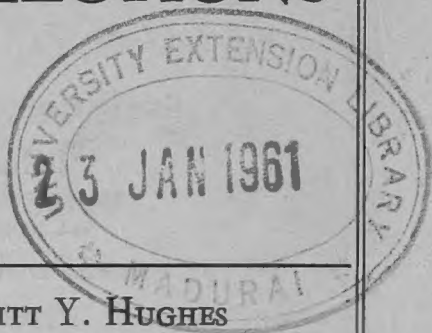
JOHN MILTON

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PROSE SELECTIONS

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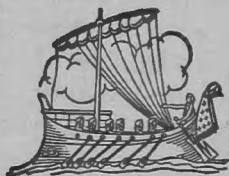
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**Interpreti J. Miltonis geniali  
et eruditissimo**

**JAMES HOLLY HANFORD**



## PREFACE

These selections from Milton's prose have been made in order both to illustrate his poetry and to furnish complete editions of five of his most representative tracts together with as much of a few others as will suffice to chart his development as a thinker. Although spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing conform to modern taste, the texts try to reproduce their originals faithfully. *Of Education* is based on a photostat of the Huntington Library copy of the first edition, that of 1644. *Reason of Church Government* is based on the Huntington Library copy of the first edition, that of 1642. The fragments of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* are founded on the Huntington Library copy of the second edition, that of 1644. *Areopagitica* has been edited from a photostat of the Huntington Library copy of the first edition, that of 1644. The *Tenure* rests on the Huntington Library copy of the second edition, which was probably printed late in 1649, but may have been early in 1650. The *Ready and Easy Way* is based on a photostat of the only known extant copy of the second edition, that in the Harvard College library. The translations of three Oratorical Performances are original, but the fragments of the *Second Defence* are taken with only slight changes from the translation of Robert Fellowes. Bishop Sumner's translation of *The Christian Doctrine* has been used unchanged. It is hardly fair to him to reproduce his work without his notes, which should once for all have made the interest of the treatise to readers of *Paradise Lost* abundantly clear. Limitations of space make that impossible, and Professor Maurice Kelley's exhaustive treatment of the matter in *This Great Argument* has now superseded those notes.

Among previous editors to whom I am indebted are Mr.

Ainsworth, Mr. Allison, and Mr. Clark, with their respective editions of the tract *Of Education*, the *Tenure*, and the *Way*. White's and Hales's work on *Areopagitica* has put me under a heavier obligation than can always be acknowledged in my notes. In the translation of Milton's Prolusions Mrs. Tillyard has set an example of felicity which I cannot hope to rival, but—thanks to Professor Frederick Carey's careful scrutiny of my work—I hope that my rendering is accurate and also expressive of the easy and often ironical formality of the original.

For tracking down Henry VIII's Vicar of Hell in *Areopagitica* I am indebted to Professor Mark Eccles of the University of Wisconsin and to Professor William H. Dunham of Yale. For the identification of Herveus Burgidolensis as the man to whom Milton referred as St. Anselm of Canterbury in *The Reason of Church Government*, I, v, I am obliged to Dom Anselm Strittmatter of St. Anselm's Priory. The chapter in my Introduction on *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* has been criticized by Professor Allan H. Gilbert of Duke University, and that on the *Tenure* and the *Way* has been castigated by Mr. Godfrey Davies of the Huntington Library. My greatest personal debt is to Professor William Haller of Barnard College for his many useful suggestions in the course of a careful reading of the entire manuscript of the Introduction. To the Huntington Library itself I owe the year of leisure there which made much of my research possible.

M. Y. H.

Madison, Wisconsin

21 December, 1946

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## CHRONOLOGY

1608, December 9. Milton is born in Bread Street, Cheapside, London.

1611, January. George Abbot, a doctrinal sympathizer with puritanism, succeeds Richard Bancroft as Archbishop of Canterbury.

The "Authorized Version" of the Bible is published.

1618. Puritan sabbatarianism is snubbed by James I's Declaration of Sports.

1620. Milton is admitted to St. Paul's School.

August. The *Mayflower* and *Speedwell* sail for New England.

1625, February 12. Milton matriculates at Christ's College, Cambridge.

March 27. Charles I succeeds to the English throne.

1628, June 7. By signing the Petition of Right, Charles recognizes Parliament's consent as necessary to the exaction of "any gift, loan, benevolence"—or tax by the Crown.

Abbott's control of the Church is temporarily exercised by William Laud, who becomes Bishop of London.

1629, March. Milton is promoted to the B. A. degree.

Sir John Eliot and other members of Parliament are imprisoned in violation of parliamentary privilege.

Dissolution of Parliament begins eleven years without parliamentary government.

1632, July. Milton is promoted to the M. A. degree. He goes to Horton.

1633. Sir Thomas Wentworth, President of the Council of the North, goes as Lord Deputy to Ireland.

August 6. Laud becomes Archbishop of Canterbury and seeks to prevent the ordination of puritan chaplains and lecturers.

1634. William Prynne is fined £5000 and mutilated for publishing *Histriomastix: A Scourge of Stage Players* in 1632. September 29. *A Mask (Comus)* is performed at Ludlow Castle.
- October. The first royal writ for ship-money is issued.
- 1635-6. Wentworth's tyranny brings prosperity to Ireland, but his plantation of Connaught sows the seed of rebellion in 1641.
- 1637, June 14. Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton sentenced by the Star Chamber to fines of £5000 and loss of their ears. July 23. Laud's effort to supplant John Knox's *Book of Common Order* in the Scottish Kirk with the new Service Book results in the Edinburgh Riots.
- November. *Lycidas* is published with other elegies *Justo Eduardo King*.
- 1638, April. Milton goes to Italy.
- 1639, June 18. The Treaty of Berwick ends the First Bishops' War.
- August. Milton returns to England.
- Autumn. Milton takes a house in St. Bride's Churchyard and begins schoolmastering.
- 1640, April 13 to May 5. The Short Parliament refuses to subordinate redress of grievances to appropriations for the Second Bishops' War.
- October 21. The Treaty of Ripon ends the war by confirming the triumph of Presbyterianism in Scotland.
- November 3. The Long Parliament meets.
- December. Bishop Hall's *Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament: By a Dutifull Sonne of the Church*.
- 1641, January 23. The Ministers' Petition asks for the exclusion of the bishops from Parliament.
- February 24. The House of Commons votes to impeach Archbishop Laud.
- March 20. *An Answer to a Book entituled, 'An Humble Remonstrance.' In which the original of Liturgy (and) Episcopacy is discussed and Quaeres propounded Concerning*



*both; the parity of Bishops and Presbyters in Scripture demonstrated; The occasion of their Imparities in Antiquitie discovered. The Disparitie of the Ancient and Modern Bishops manifested. The Antiquitie of Ruling Elders in the Church vindicated. The Prelaticall Church Bounded.* Written by Smectymnuus.

April. *Of Reformation in England, and the Causes that hitherto have hindered it.*

April 12. *A Defence of the Humble Remonstrance against the frivolous and false exceptions of Smectymnuus; wherein the right of Liturgie and Episcopacie is clearly vindicated from the vain cavils and challenges of the Answerers.* By the Author of the said *Humble Remonstrance*, etc.

May 12. Execution of the Earl of Strafford.

May 27. The Root-and-Branch Bill is introduced in the House of Commons.

May (?) *Of Prelatical Episcopacy, and whether it may be deduced from the Apostolical Times, by virtue of those Testimonies which are alleged to that purpose in some late treatises; one whereof goes under the Name of James, Archbishop of Armagh.*

*Certaine Briefe Treatises, written by Diverse Learned Men, concerning the ancient and moderne Government of the Church,* published at Oxford.

June 26. *A Vindication of the Answer to the Humble Remonstrance from the unjust imputations of Frivolousnesse and Falsehood; wherein the cause of Liturgy and Episcopacy is further debated:* By the same Smectymnuus.

July. *Animadversions upon the Remonstant's Defence against Smectymnuus.*

August (?) *A Short Answer to the Tedious Vindication of Smectymnuus;* By the Author of the *Humble Remonstrance*.

October 23. Rebellion begins in Ireland.

November 23. The Grand Remonstrance lists Parliament's demands upon Charles for the reform of the Church and the protection of civil rights.

1642, January 4. Charles violates the privileges of the House of Commons by trying to arrest Hampden, Haselrig, Holles, Pym, and Strode.

February. *The Reason of Church Government Urged against Prelaty.*

*A Modest Confutation of a Slanderous and Scurrilous Libell intituled Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence against Smectymnuus.*

March. *An Apology against a Pamphlet call'd A Modest Confutation of the Animadversions of the Remonstrant against Smectymnuus.*

June (?) Milton marries Mary Powell.

August 22. Charles raises his standard against Parliament at Nottingham.

October 23. Retreat of the Earl of Essex toward London after engaging the royal forces indecisively at Edgehill.

November. *When the Assault was intended to the City.*

1643, February to April. Abortive negotiations between Charles and Parliament's Commissioners at Oxford.

August. *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.*

September 25. Parliament binds itself to the Solemn League and Covenant with the Scots.

1644, February 2. Second edition of *The Doctrine and Discipline.*

June 5. *Of Education.*

July 2. Fairfax, Cromwell, and Leslie's Scots crush the Royalists at Marston Moor.

July 15. *The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce.*

November 24. *Areopagitica.*

1645, January 10. Execution of Archbishop Laud by Parliament's act of attainder.

March 4. *Tetrachordon and Colasterion.*

June 14. Fairfax and Cromwell end Charles's military power by conquering at Naseby.

Montrose's effort to swing Scotland and Glamorgan's effort to bring Irish forces to Charles's help finally fail.

1646 (?) Sonnets: "A Book was writ of late call'd *Tetrachordon*," "I did but prompt the age . . .," and "On the new forcers of conscience."

January 2. Minor Poems.

May 5. Charles becomes the voluntary prisoner of the Scots.

Summer. Charles loses the respect of both Scots and English in his attempt to play them against each other in negotiating over the propositions of Newcastle.

1647, February. The Scots deliver Charles to commissioners of the English Parliament.

June 15. The Declaration of the Army asks for the purge of offending members of Parliament and for drastic limitation of its power by a constitutional settlement.

November 11. Charles flees from Hampton Court to Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight.

1647-8, Winter. Royalist risings by Anglicans and Presbyterians in England and Wales.

1648, August 17. Cromwell's victory over the Scots under the Duke of Hamilton at Preston ends Charles's hopes of success in the Second Civil War.

Sonnet "On the Lord General Fairfax at the Siege of Colchester."

(?) *History of Britain* composed.

December 1. The Council of Officers removes Charles to Hurst Castle.

December 6. Colonel Pride purges Parliament of the Presbyterian members opposed to severity to the King.

1649, January 20. Charles is brought to trial before Parliament's newly constituted High Court of Justice.

January 30. Charles is executed.

February 13. *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*.

March. Milton is appointed Secretary for Foreign Tongues to the Council of State.

May 16. *Observations upon the Articles of Peace*.

May 19. England declared a free commonwealth.

August. Cromwell begins suppression of the Irish rebellion.

- October 6. *Eikonoklastes*.
- 1650, February 15. Second edition of *The Tenure*.  
Second edition of *Eikonoklastes*.
- September 3. Cromwell crushes the Scots at Dunbar.
- December 31. *A Defence of the English People*.
- 1651, September 3. Cromwell and Lambert defeat Charles II at the Battle of Worcester.
- 1652, May. Sonnet: "To the Lord General Cromwell."  
July. Sonnet: "To Sir Henry Vane the Younger."  
June. Death of Mary Powell Milton.
- 1653, April 20. Cromwell expels Parliament and alienates many republicans from his personal leadership.  
December 16. Cromwell inaugurated as Lord Protector under the Instrument of Government.
- 1654, May 30. *A Second Defence of the English People*.  
September 3. The first Parliament of the Protectorate assembles.
- 1655, January 22. The Parliament is dissolved by Cromwell.
- 1655, March. Establishment of local administration by major generals.  
June (?) Sonnet: "On the late Massacre in Piedmont."  
August 8. *Defence against Alexander Morus. Defensio pro se*.
- 1656, September 17. The second Parliament of the Protectorate assembles, but republican members are excluded.  
November. Milton marries Katherine Woodcock.
- 1657, May 8. After hesitation, Cromwell refuses the kingly title offered him by Parliament in the Humble Petition and Advice.
- 1658, January 20. The second Parliament's second session opens with many of the excluded members readmitted, Cromwell's attempt to establish a new house of lords fails, and General Lambert refuses to serve in the new Council of State.  
February 4. Cromwell dissolves Parliament without warning.  
Katherine Woodcock Milton dies.

May. Milton edits Sir Walter Raleigh's *Cabinet Council*.  
Sonnet: "Methought I saw my late espoused Saint."

September 3. Cromwell dies and Richard Cromwell succeeds as Protector.

October. Second edition of *A Defence of the English People*.

1659, January 27. A new Parliament assembles with a small but aggressive republican minority.

February 16. *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*.

April 21. The army compels Richard Cromwell to dissolve Parliament.

May 7. The Long Parliament is restored.

Richard Cromwell abdicates.

August. *Considerations touching the Likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of the Church*.

October 13. The Long Parliament is expelled by General Lambert. The civil and military supporters of a republic are divided. General Monck declares for the Long Parliament in Scotland.

*On the Ruptures of the Commonwealth*.

1658-1660 (?) *On Christian Doctrine* composed.

1659, December 26. The Long Parliament reassembles.

1660, January 2 (?) Monck crosses the Tweed on his march to London; the English army under Lambert sullenly gives way.

February 21. General Monck allows the excluded members to resume their places in the Long Parliament.

March 3. *A Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth*.

March 16. Parliament voluntarily dissolves.

*The Present Means and Brief Delineation of a Free Commonwealth* (in a letter to General Monck).

April. *Brief Notes of a late Sermon*.

Second edition of *A Ready and Easy Way*.

April 28. The Convention Parliament meets.

May 8. Parliament votes for restoration of Charles II.

- May 29. Charles II reaches London.
1661. Trials of the regicide judges. Milton in hiding though no attempt is made to restrain his liberty.
- 1663, February. Milton marries Elizabeth Minshull.
- 1667, August (?) *Paradise Lost*.
1669. *Accedence commenced Grammar*.
1671. *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*.
1672. *A fuller Institution of the Art of Logic*.
1673. *Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism*.
1673. Second edition of the Minor Poems.
1674. Second edition of *Paradise Lost*.  
*A Declaration, or Letters Patent*.
- November 8. Milton dies.
1676. Latin State Letters are published.
1682. *A Brief History of Muscovia* is published.

## INTRODUCTION

### I. SOME EARLY ORATORICAL PERFORMANCES AND OF EDUCATION

1. Our most familiar anecdote about Milton's education is the story that, shortly after he entered Christ's College, Cambridge, as a boy of sixteen with a brilliant record at St. Paul's School behind him, his college tutor "whipt him." His transfer to another director after that quarrel suggests that the better man won. The clash may have been personal, or it may have sprung from Milton's dislike even as a freshman for the established curriculum of studies. The remark of his unfriendly biographer, Anthony Wood, that in later years he became "a great reproacher of the universities," is quite justified by his attacks on Oxford and Cambridge in his anti-episcopal pamphlets, but his main motive for what he said then was political. How much of a rebel he was against the social and intellectual life of the Cambridge that he knew as an undergraduate, it is hard to tell; but he certainly was not a submissive or uncritical student. It is natural to suppose that he chose the more liberal of the two universities because he came from a liberal and Puritan home, yet we should remember that the father's guiding principle in the son's expensive education was respect for the boy's personality. His brother Christopher grew up in that same home to be a Royalist and a Catholic. At Cambridge Milton was already on the way to become the Independent in politics and religion whom we find misunderstanding himself in *The Reason of Church Government*, and discovering himself in *Areopagitica*.

2. Nine years after Milton took his M. A., when he was in the heat of his pamphlet war against the bishops, whose

influence at Cambridge he resented, he spoke of the students there as "loitering, bezling, harloting." The charge was promptly challenged, and so a red herring was drawn across the trail of Milton's experience as an undergraduate. In reply he wrote the characteristic digression of self-defense in *An Apology for Smectymnuus* which is reproduced in this book. It has the ring of honest autobiography, and it is consistent with his statement in the *Second Defence of the English People* that, after taking his M. A., he left the university in spite of an invitation to stay there, presumably as a fellow of one of the colleges. Perhaps his nephew, Edward Phillips, was not far from the truth in writing that as an undergraduate he was "loved and admired by the whole university." Our best evidence about his social and psychological experience there, however, is his own contemporary record. The tract *Of Education*, which was published when Milton was thirty-six and had had three not altogether happy years with Edward and John Phillips and a few other pupils in his own house in London, gains much in significance if it is read in the light of his personal record of his life at Cambridge.

3. That record consists of some Latin poems and of the seven *Prolusions* or *Oratorical Performances* which were among his required college exercises, and which he allowed to be published together with a selection of his correspondence in the year 1674. The poems are all to be found in the second volume of the present series, and the first two *Oratorical Performances* are translated in this volume together with the greater part of the last. The first of them, "Whether Day or Night is the more excellent," is discussed in paragraph ten below, and the second, "On the Music of the Spheres," is noticed in paragraph eleven. An interesting feature in the third is its demand, in common with the seventh, for the training in history, philosophy, and natural science which Milton missed at Cambridge. *Performances* four and five are formal arguments that (a) no substance, when it is destroyed, is reduced to the first matter or *materia prima* of Scholastic Philosophy; and that (b) there are no partial forms in any



animal other than its own form. In the sixth *Performance* Milton extracted what comedy he could from the university's curriculum. In the seventh and last, on the question whether learning makes men happier than ignorance, he took the side opposite to that which Erasmus had ironically defended in *The Praise of Folly*.<sup>1</sup> In one way or another, the last four *Performances* criticise the Scholastic Philosophy which is formally attacked in the third.

4. In attacking Scholasticism Milton was no pioneer, for even before the way was shown in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* educators like the Spaniard Vives and reformers like the German Melanchthon had preached Erasmus' principle that no boy should be drilled to perform dialectical stunts with vague concepts like the Aristotelian principles of form and matter. In France the movement had been led by the great anti-Aristotelian, Peter Ramus, whose murder in the massacre of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Day had made him a kind of Protestant saint. As early as 1585 Cambridge had given a fellowship to a Ramist, George Downham, whose commentary on Ramic logic seems to have made his memory permanently offensive to conservative thinkers in the English church. The surmise of Milton's opponents—probably Bishop Hall and one of his sons—in *An Apology against a Pamphlet*, that "Downham confirmed him a logician," may have been an insignificant sneer at Milton's training. We know, however, that he was keenly interested in Ramic logic, seeing in it a new light in the search for truth as valuable as that which Bacon had kindled in the *Novum Organum*. He undertook to interpret and amplify Ramus' system for Englishmen, and in spite of the scant attention paid to logic in *Of Education*, he later fulfilled his purpose by writing *A more ample institution of the Art of Logic, arranged after the method of Peter Ramus*, which was published two years before his death.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the treatment of the topic in Ortensio Landis *Paradossi* (1543, chapter iii), Charles Etienne's translation of which, *Paradoxes, autrement, Propos contraires à l'opinion de la plus part des hommes. Livre non moins profitable que jactéieux*, had seven editions between 1553 and 1561.

Though that work may now seem as barren as the earlier discipline which it tried to supersede, it is interesting for the light that it sheds upon Milton's thought in his prose and in *Paradise Lost*. More interesting today, however, is the question whether his sympathy with the spiritual revolution in which Bacon was a leader ever, either at Cambridge or during his years of pamphleteering, brought him to what we should now regard as a scientific outlook upon the universe.

5. This is not the place to discuss Milton's outlook in *Paradise Lost* on questions which were raised for him by investigators like Galileo and thinkers like Bacon. The problem here is to interpret his protest in his third and seventh undergraduate *Performances* against the indifference of his teachers to history and natural science, and his inclusion in *Of Education* of an introduction to theoretical and even to applied science in his scheme for the training of boys between twelve and twenty years of age. Perhaps the safest approach to that question is to recall Miss Nicolson's conclusion that, however much Milton may have been stirred by the vast spaces which Galileo's telescope opened up, he did not imagine them, rather than God, as infinite. However keen his early interest in natural science was, there is no escaping the fact that during the twelve years of his life that were lived after the foundation of the Royal Society he was impervious to its influence. As Mr. Basil Willey insists, "he had nothing about him of the experimental philosopher." Countless references to Bacon throughout his prose attest his respect for what he took Bacon to represent, but in the seventeenth century Baconianism varied strangely from one interpreter to another. To an outstanding educational reformer like the Bohemian, John Amos Comenius, it stood for the inductive method of teaching as applied to all natural phenomena, and for their interpretation in a great book of knowledge which would be a royal road to universal and utterly democratic enlightenment. Although the modern world knows Comenius best for his pedagogical book, the *Great Didactic*, which was not published until 1849, his heart was in his "anatomy of the universe," his great attempt to

"transcribe out of Gods bookes, Nature and Scripture, into a table for our owne use, such things as concerne this present and the future life." So, at least, his purpose was translated by Samuel Hartlib, the Prussian exile who came to England in 1628, gradually interested Parliament in his projects for applying scientific methods to agriculture, and in September, 1641, was largely responsible for bringing Comenius to England for a not altogether fortunate visit of about ten months. Before Comenius left London—lured to Sweden by a gilded offer to return there to his true metier as a writer of textbooks—Hartlib was busy interpreting his educational plans in a book called *A Reformation of Schooles*. Its publication in 1642 made Hartlib the natural recipient of several open letters on education, which ranged in character all the way from proposals like William Pettie's for trade or technical schools to Milton's plea for his regional academies in *Of Education*.

6. The tracts written by Comenius' champions in England, Hartlib and Cyprian Kinner, amusingly contrast with *Of Education*, and yet illuminate its difficulties for modern readers. Both men had unbounded faith in Comenius' 'realistic' theories. By showing "Natural Things in the living book of Nature, Things Artificial in the Shops and Work-houses of their Makers," Kinner expected to teach "all things necessary to be known . . . without the usuall confused multitude of books, . . . by the only meer help of sensible Objects, and by Talk"<sup>2</sup> By such methods Hartlib believed that children could both be given a mature understanding of the physical world and also be brought to look at nature as "the book of God." It was all to be made so "plaine and pervious" that "any, though but of moderate apprehension, even children of eight yeares of age, may easily conceive of our whole Metaphysickes."<sup>3</sup> Pansophism was Comenius' name for his system and for his book about it. The innocently ambitious name, he confessed, was borrowed from Peter Lauremberg, and he acknowledged a

<sup>2</sup> *A Continuation of M. John Amos Comenius School-Endeavours*, 1647, by Cyprian Kinner, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *A Reformation of Schooles*, p. 51.

debt to many encyclopedic writers from Aristotle to Bacon, yet he modestly hoped that his work would make the study of those giants in the schools forever unnecessary. Hartlib spoke of the system as "a gate of Wisdom" and an "Amphitheatre of God's Wisdom for all mankind," excluding "neither man nor woman, . . . neither noble nor ignoble, neither craftsman nor ploughman."<sup>4</sup> Combining his religious and pedagogical faith in words which help us to understand what Milton meant when he wrote that "the end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright," Hartlib said that pansophic education aimed to give every man "that heavenly gift of wisdom, to repair (God's) image in us."<sup>5</sup> In "the innermost Court of the Temple of Wisdome," he thought, we might recover the "Free and Unlimited Will" which was ours before its "horrible abuse" by Adam in Eden, and accomplish "also our recovery into the state of Salvation by Christ, both God and Man."<sup>6</sup>

7. The religious and democratic hopes in pansophism were its main appeal to Comenius and Hartlib. They knew very well that it had little to do with the mastery of the world's great books and of the languages in which most of them then could only be read. Comenius said frankly that his scheme for popular education was intended for a different public than that for which he wrote his *Janua* or *Door to Latin*, to which Milton rather contemptuously alludes. This royal road to a quick mastery of the language was one of many that interested Hartlib, though it was less ambitious than the scheme of a certain Mr. Beal, of whom Hartlib wrote in 1661 with the hope that "a fullness of Greek and Latin may be taught young men of ordinary capacities in two months," jointly with "the use of the globes and some insight into geography and history and the pleasanter parts of practical philosophy."<sup>7</sup> If Milton's curriculum in *Of Education* seems absurdly ambitious, we

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>7</sup> *Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington*, II, p. 13. Chet-  
ham Society Publications XXXVI.

should remember that some of the founders of the Royal Society themselves were interested in Mr. Beal's project. We should remember also that programs of study comparable with Milton's had been followed in some of the most famous continental schools, such as Vittorino da Feltre's Giocosa near Venice, for over a century; and that all Europe was still influenced by Erasmus' expectation that adolescents would read quite as many Greek and Latin authors as Milton names in *Of Education*. In English schools in the seventeenth century even Hebrew was enough studied for a practical schoolmaster like John Brinsley to think that a year sufficed "to make a boy a good Hebrician," inasmuch as the language is "all comprised, so farre as is necessarie for us to know, in that one sacred volume of the old Testament."<sup>8</sup> Milton differed from his contemporaries not by proposing to do more with the classical languages than they did, but by recommending an enthusiastic use of the laboratory method in their study, and by following John Colet's advice in his edition of Lily's Latin Grammar (1515), that "students should above all busily learn and read good Latin authors, . . . desiring none other rules but their examples." Though Milton's plans to write the *Accedence Commenced Grammar*, which was not published until 1669, may have begun while he was a teacher himself, he said nothing about them in *Of Education*, for he regarded the ability of the teacher as more important than the quality of the textbook.

8. To understand *Of Education* we must think of Latin more as a literature to be read than as a language to be learned. The language, as John Locke said, in his *Thoughts on Education* (1693), could be learned "almost in play." Unless we share Milton's view of the classics as a great library of natural science, philosophy, and history, we shall misunderstand him at every step of his way through the long list of ancient writers that he has to suggest. Cato, Varro, and Columella, the three outstanding Roman writers on agriculture, stand first not primarily because they are easy to read, but because, handsomely bound together in edition after edition during the

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<sup>8</sup> *Ludus Literarius*, p. 244.

Renaissance, they were the recognized handbooks of many an English gentleman farmer, and the readiest way of introducing boys to natural science in terms of the world around them. For the same reason Milton mentioned the foremost Roman writer on architecture, Virtruvius, who was the authority most often mentioned by his friend, Sir Henry Wotton, the Provost of Eton, in his popular *Elements of Architecture* (1624). His object was to go by way of the practical sciences that his pupils saw applied on their fathers' estates to the less immediately familiar but no less concrete study of geography. His next suggestion, accordingly, was that "Rare and Singuler worke of Pomponius Mela, That excellent . . . Cosmographer, *Of the situation of the world, with the Longitude and Latitude of everie Kingdome, Regent, Province, Rivers, Mountaines, Citties and Countries*"—as it was entitled by its Elizabethan translator, Arthur Golding, in 1590. With it he naturally thought of *The Surveye of the World* by Dionysius Periegetes, whose translator, Thomas Twine, called his book "necessary and delectable for students of Geography, Saylers, and others." Such books could stir the imagination and arouse scientific curiosity for a lifetime. So at least intelligent men thought; and so the chemist, Robert Boyle, one of whose nephews attended Milton's school in London, emphatically said, recalling an experience of his own as a boy of nine at Eton.

9. Bibliographies of works by both ancient and more or less contemporary writers for use in schools were often extended far beyond Milton's ample list. Vives' fourth book *On Education*, which may have been a 'source' for his tract, has a much longer catalogue, with Cato and Vitruvius playing their elementary part, Seneca's *Natural Questions* and Pliny's *Natural History* in places of honor, and an acquaintance with Aristotle's biological and astronomical works taken for granted. Such lists always stressed astronomical writers like Manilius and Aratus. Though the astrology in Manilius' *Astromomicon* frightened some readers off, it attracted others; and everyone knew at least the Homeric opening line of Aratus' *Phaenomena*, which asserts the dependence of all things on Zeus. (St. Paul

had quoted it, and it was to be found among kindred passages in popular books like the *Excerpts from Stobaeus* which Milton's friend, the great Dutch jurist Grotius, edited. Milton's marginal notes in his own copy of Aratus show how closely and enthusiastically he read a minor classical poet whom he regarded also as an authentic scientist. In spite of Milton's admiration for Bacon's revolt against the Aristotelian tradition in logic, there is nothing strange in his recommendation of Aristotle's works in natural science. Bacon himself set a high value on them, and Robert Boyle, who was a far better chemist, though perhaps not so good a philosopher as Bacon, and who seriously feared the 'atheistical' tendency in Aristotle, could not bear to deny him to young readers. Acknowledging that Aristotle was not so good a theist as he was an anatomist, Boyle fell back upon a passage in a spurious Aristotelian work, *On the World, to Alexander*, in which God's place in the universe is compared to that of a pilot in a ship and of a charioteer in a chariot. Milton's allusion to Aristotle in his third *Oratorical Performance* as a great teacher of physical science, and the later reference to him in *Paradise Regained* (IV, 251) as the tutor of Alexander the Great, may mean that Milton looked at Aristotle with something like our modern willingness to let students read authorities whose views are not those of their teachers.

10. Though Milton's interest in science has seemed to some critics to overshadow the humanistic element in *Of Education*, the fact is that his encyclopedic course of study was philosophical and literary through and through, and naturally culminated in the reading of the highest literary form, Greek tragedy. Like Adam under Raphael's instruction in *Paradise Lost*, Book V, his boys were to explore the "scale of nature" in order to understand humanity and perhaps divinity also.<sup>9</sup> Milton took much humanistic study for granted. He assumed that the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* and such popular works as

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<sup>9</sup> This interpretation is brilliantly defended by M. W. Bundy in "Milton's view of Education," *J.E.G.P.* XXI, (1922), 127-152, and by B. Rajan in "Simple, Sensuous, and Passionate," *R.E.S.* XXI, (1945), 289-301.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* would be read at an early age. Perhaps he rather regretted the pagan spirit of the classic myths, which were being decried by educational reformers like John Webster, on whose *Examen Academicarum* Milton's ideas may have had a liberalizing influence. Milton was Puritan enough to suspect the classic myths while at the same time he loved them. In his first *Oratorical Performance* his fascination by the myths is balanced by his humorous willingness to condescend to them. He was arguing that Day is better than Night, among other reasons, because Night is the grandchild of Demogorgon and the mother of Tribulation, Envy, Fear, and Guile. Indeed, he made Night's brood include the whole army of her offspring as his audience knew it in the familiar genealogical tree which illustrated the first book of Boccaccio's *Genealogy of the Gods*. Far in the background behind Boccaccio's conception Milton knew that there lay the sheer poetry of Hesiod's treatment of the myths about the birth and children of Night in the *Theogony*. His task was to amuse the Cambridge dons by combining this traditional lore about Night—with all its possibilities of pure poetic fancy, heavy moral allegory, and even of obscenity—into an amusing but formal speech. A touch of playful condescension to his mythological material was inevitable. Yet in spite of it, and in spite of the greater stress on the literature of knowledge than on that of power in *Of Education*, few modern readers will agree with Dr. Johnson's complaint (1779) that Milton sacrificed ethical and esthetic values to scientific curiosity in his educational plan. Everything in his tract is consistent with his avowed aim to prepare young men to make the decisions of their lives in the light of the best books in every field of human activity.

II. To many readers *Of Education* is most disappointing in its treatment of music. Milton's love for the art seems to be submerged in anxiety about its moral effect. His passion for the organ is unmistakable, as it is in *At a Solemn Music*; but to understand both that poem and what he says about music in *Of Education* we must read his second *Oratorical Performance*, *On the Music of the Spheres*. There he plays with the



idea that underneath the physical and moral strife in the universe there is a harmony which—as Pythagoras taught six centuries before Christ—can be heard only by the pure in heart. Like most of his contemporaries, Milton believed in the almost central importance of music in education. What he says on the subject was a commonplace which we find voiced by many men of whom we do not think as Puritans. In *The Compleat Gentleman* Henry Peacham recalled that, “Aristotle averreth Musicke to be the onely disposer of the mind to Vertue and Goodnesse; wherefore he reckoneth it among those four principall exercises wherein he would have children instructed.”<sup>10</sup> When the background of Milton’s attitude to music is known, it proves to be distinctly liberal. The repeated stress on the bad social effects of corrupt music in Plato’s *Laws*<sup>11</sup> had been taken very seriously in the early Renaissance. On Plato’s authority Erasmus had spoken severely about the popular music of the early sixteenth century in Holland. The treatment of music in the Roman work on education which Milton says that he most trusted, Quintilian’s *Institutes*, is uncompromisingly moral, for like Milton, Quintilian thought of education strictly as a training for public service. Leaders of men, he said,<sup>12</sup> could not be properly trained in a society where music had lapsed from its prime function of inspiring military and civic virtue. Still stiffer attitudes were taken by the Italian Renaissance commentators on Quintilian, Laurentius Valla and Pomponius Laetus, who illustrated his principle with famous examples of the discipline of the passions of youth by the great musicians from the time of Orpheus down, and gave Pythagoras a prominent part in their discussions.

12. In the seventh *Oratorical Performance* Milton refers to the best known passage in Greek literature where music figures as a device for hardening character, that in Plutarch’s *Life of Lycurgus*. There the Spartan lawgiver is represented as the

<sup>10</sup> P. 98. Cf. Aristotle, *Politics* VIII, 9–10, 1340b.

<sup>11</sup> *Laws*, 656–7, 701, 800.

<sup>12</sup> *Institutiones Oratoriae*, I, x, 11.

first collector of the Homeric poems<sup>13</sup> and also as a statesman who made patriotic music and poetry play a great part in public education.<sup>14</sup> It was from the points of view both of peace and of military discipline that Milton thought of the "famous schools of Pythagoras, Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle," to which *Of Education* refers as models for his own "institution of breeding," whose training was to be "equally good both for peace and war." Recent study of his tract, especially in Germany, has stressed the military and political purposes in his proposed schools, until they have been made to look almost like military academies. It cannot be denied that no R. O. T. C. in any American university approaches the scope of his plan to train every boy who got a "higher education" in England as a fencer and wrestler, and as an infantryman, cavalier, and engineer, on a standard high enough to produce "renowned and perfect commanders in the service of their country." Yet this soldierly training was all to be got during the short vacations and in the late afternoons, "in play." "About two hours before supper" the long day's work with books was to be ended by "a sudden alarm" calling the impatient boys "out to their military motions."

13. Spartan though Milton's proposed military training may appear to us, the purpose behind it was less nationalistic than it was revolutionary. He hoped that youth all over England might be trained in every way for leadership in national emergencies. The earlier allusion to Lycurgus in *Of Education*, where he is bracketed as a lawgiver with Solon, indicates the real direction of Milton's interest. Plutarch admired both men because they had refused to become tyrants in Sparta and Athens respectively. By the laws of Solon, Milton later recalled in *Eikonoklastes*, "tyrants were to undergo legal sentence"; and he called the code of Lycurgus "just and renowned" because it led to the trial and execution of several Spartan kings. One law of Solon which Milton approved and used to justify his own boldness in writing against episcopacy, was the prescrip-

<sup>13</sup> *Lives* IV, 4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, XXI, 1.

tion that, on pain of death, at the first sign of civil strife of any kind, every citizen should openly choose sides. A dose of Plutarch on Solon and Lycurgus, Milton thought, might prevent Englishmen, "in a dangerous fit of the commonwealth," from being "such poor, shaken, uncertain reeds, of such a tottering conscience, as many of our great counsellors have lately shown themselves."

14. Milton did not misrepresent the truth when he wrote in the *Second Defence* that *Of Education* had been conceived as one of several pamphlets which he published in the cause of liberty during the first seven years after his Italian journey. Today, after more than a century of struggle to democratize education, we find it hard to imagine secondary education in terms of Milton's plan for rural academies where groups of only one hundred and thirty boys would spend the years between twelve and twenty in reading the world's classics. No reformer in the seventeenth century—not even Comenius—dreamed of free education on secondary levels. In comparison with our great city high schools Milton's academies would seem expensive and perhaps snobbish, but in comparison with schools like Eton and Harrow in England, or Groton or Choate in this country, they would seem modest. One of their main purposes would have been to liberate young men from extravagant tastes and so prepare them to be financially independent all their lives. Their main object, said Milton, would have been to make the pupils love "virtue and true labor" as an assurance of moral freedom. If by modern standards his curriculum was too literary and involved too much abstract ethical teaching through works like Plato's *Dialogues* and Plutarch's *Moralia*, his justification may be his own record of his youthful experience in reading those "Socratic discourses," as it is to be found in the extract from *An Apology for Smectymnuus* in the present volume.

## II. THE REASON OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT URGED AGAINST PRELACY AND AN APOLOGY FOR SMECTYMNUS

15. Between Milton's graduation from Cambridge and the writing of his tract *Of Education*, twelve years passed. The first six of them he spent at his father's home in Buckinghamshire, devoted to systematic reading of ancient, ecclesiastical, medieval, and modern history, literature, and theology, but not too much absorbed in his work to write *Comus* or sometimes to visit London in search of pleasure as well as books. The result of these private studies and of the fifteen-month tour of Italy and Switzerland which followed them, was to prepare Milton magnificently to be a pamphleteer for his party and later the spokesman of Cromwell's government to Europe at large. Their immediate outcome, however, when he returned from Geneva and established himself in St. Bride's Churchyard in London in the autumn of 1639, was the experiment in schoolmastering which still occupied him when he wrote *Of Education* five years later. How happy he was as a teacher it is hard to say. While John Aubrey's gossip has it that his young wife left him because, among other reasons, she "often-times heard his nephews beaten and cry," Edward Phillips mentions her presence as a rather unwelcome interference with his teaching. The contrast between his London house with its handful of students and the academies that he described to Hartlib may have been mortifying, and teaching may have seemed a painfully indirect way to the political objectives which Milton believed that it was the main purpose of education to serve. Many of his biographers have shared Dr. Johnson's surprise that schoolmastering was the only service rendered to his country for well over a year by the young man who later described himself as having cut short his Italian visit in order to take part in England's struggle for liberty. Why he waited until the spring of 1641 to write the first of the five anti-episcopal tracts which he poured out during the next fifteen months is still his secret.

16. The fourth of those tracts is reprinted here, not because it is the longest, nor merely because it has the most autobiographical interest, but mainly because it is intrinsically the most interesting and representative of the five. It is also the least awkwardly involved in the mazes of the Presbyterians' quarrel with the bishops. Like the other four tracts, *The Reason of Church Government* is largely a rebuttal of specific pleas of the champions of episcopacy, especially of Bishop Hall. Many of its points can be appreciated only by readers who have some familiarity with the work of Milton's adversaries, and the best that a modern editor can do to make that background intelligible and vivid is to spot-light some of their most conspicuous passages in defense of the ideas which Milton attacked. Historically, we must think of *Church Government* as stemming from the tractarian struggle under Elizabeth, in the movement which William Pierce describes in his *Historical Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts*, and under James I and Charles I as Professor Haller traces it with special reference to Milton in *The Rise of Puritanism*. Milton's first and second attacks on the bishops, *Of Reformation in England* and *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, were written early in 1641, several months after the House of Commons in the Long Parliament had shown its opposition to Archbishop Laud's policies by impeaching him. It was a moment of doubt. No one knew whether the triumph of Presbyterianism in Scotland against the efforts of Charles and Laud to crush it in the Bishops' Wars meant that Parliament's resentment would stop with Laud's punishment or go on to clear the way for Presbyterianism in England by abolishing Episcopacy outright, as was proposed in the pending Root-and-Branch Bill. Sir Edward Dereing, who proposed the bill, was really working only for the exclusion of the bishops from the House of Lords. Practical politicians shrank from abolishing Episcopacy but were ready to make common cause with its critics, who were proposing to try to reduce the bishops to the status of virtual equality which they seem to have had in New Testament times with ordinary priests or presbyters—to use the term which explains how Presby-

terianism was opposed to Episcopacy, and why it had the support of many clergymen of the rank and file. Just what personal risks Milton took in championing the Presbyterians it is hard to tell, but they were great enough to explain his violence.<sup>1</sup>

17. He was violent because he was afraid of a compromise in a quarrel which had gone too far for either side to feel secure without a total victory. The arbiter of the dispute must be Parliament, and Parliament's dread of religious anarchy was the strongest bulwark of Episcopacy. If heresy were not controlled by the bishops' courts, what, men asked, was to save the country from the independent sects, Brownists and others, which figure in *Church Government*, I, vi. Even Presbyterianism, with its tight organization into regional, provincial, and national councils, or synods, seemed incapable of restraining the divisive forces; and it was suspected of aiming at an arbitrary power more dangerous to personal liberty than the episcopal tyranny which, in 1637, had fined and mutilated the Puritan pamphleteers, Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne. Only a few members of Parliament—men like Robert Greville, Lord Brooke, and the scholar, John Selden, whom Milton quoted in *Areopagitica*—were more interested in toleration than they were in a national church strong enough to impose its discipline on the country as a whole. Even Milton's defense of the principle at the end of the first book of *Church Government*—where he anticipated *Areopagitica* by recognizing the sects as indispensable to the "fierce encounter of truth and falsehood together"—was subordinate to his central attack on the bishops. He represented them as a faction in the English Church, defending their selfish interests and bearing, "with their forked mitres, the badge of schism, or the stamp of the cloven foot." This was his retort courteous to the assertion of Joseph

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<sup>1</sup>In "Die Beweggründe zu Miltons Festlandreise" (*Beiblatt zur Anglia*, Band 50 (1939), pp. 278-82) H. Mutschmann argues that Milton's Italian visit was a cowardly flight from the punishment of bolder pamphleteers like Prynne, and that he returned only when his safety was secured by the outcome of the Bishops' War.

Hall, then Bishop of Exeter, in *A Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament*, that "parochial absoluteness and independence"—"division in *semper indivisibilia*, till they come to very Atomes"—threatened the Puritans "when they are once past the true bonds."

18. In 1642 the answer of most Puritans to reasoning like Hall's was the cry of faith in Presbyterian discipline which echoes in the first two chapters of *Church Government*. A little experience of Presbyterianism in power was soon to disillusion Milton and provoke his attack on its leaders in the sonnet *On the new Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament* (1646). As their false triumph in Westminster Assembly and in Parliament encouraged their ambition for a theocratic state with a dominant clerical caste, Milton lost faith in them. His enthusiastic acceptance of their discipline in 1642 should not be compared with the acceptance of party discipline—communist or fascist—by modern idealists aiming at a temporary political advantage. Discipline was as important to the Puritans as it is in modern revolutions, but it was not for their party solidarity that the Presbyterians were called "Disciplinarians." To Calvinists generally—Swiss, French, Scottish, and English—the discipline which John Calvin described in one of the best known chapters of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (the twelfth in Book IV) meant something comparable with the ideally just and efficient state of modern socialism. It was a final object as well as a technique of social effort. The ideal—as both Calvin and Milton pointed out—applies at one end to family life, and it stretches up through the larger family of the Church to inform all human society and even the angelic hosts in heaven. Even "the blessed in paradise," Milton says, are not "left without discipline, whose golden surveying reed marks out and measures every quarter and circuit of New Jerusalem." To his public the remark did not seem strange, for its allusion to Revelation xi, 1, was familiar. The German commentator Paraeus, whose views of the Apocalypse play a part in the Preface to Book II of *Church Government*, interpreted the rod by which the Church is meas-

ured in this verse as meaning "the most perfect rule of faith and church discipline," the word of God. The Presbyterian pamphleteer, Alexander Leighton, in *An Appeal to the Parliament* (1628, p. 110), made the Calvinist principle into something rather like modern party discipline, when he wrote that, "As Discipline is the soule of warre, the spirit of Policie, so it is the *Sceptre of Christ*, swaying his owne house according to his heart's desire." The disciplinary ideal which Milton said required "virtue heroic" was both religious and revolutionary. Calvinist discipline, says Troeltsch in *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (p. 601), was both "a renewal of the Old Testament concern for the practical life of the nation" and "an appeal to that fearless heroism which will dare and achieve anything for the glory of God."

19. As a program for revolt or reform in 1642 Presbyterian discipline seemed to many Englishmen to be "the very visible shape and image of virtue" which Milton thought it. Some doubts were felt about the severe control of private morals in its name by the Presbyterians in Geneva and Edinburgh,<sup>2</sup> but Milton seems to have had no misgivings. In a free church in a free society he believed that men would have enough "generous and Christianly reverence of one another," if they went astray, to listen to the admonition of "their pastor" and "a certain number of grave and faithful brethren." The picture is idyllic, but it was drawn from the words of St. Paul and Jesus. It had the authority also of Milton's friends, his former tutor, Thomas Young, and four other Puritan divines, who had overdrawn it in the reply to Bishop Hall which they signed by running their initials into the composite name of SMECTYMNUUS:—*An Answer to the Book entituled An Humble Remonstrance*. Since his friends' tract had drawn an anonymous answer from Hall, to which Milton had replied

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<sup>2</sup> "In June, 1646, an unenthusiastic Parliament accepted the ordinance which, after a three-month debate of intolerable tedium, emerged from the Assembly's Committee on the Discipline and Government of the Church, and which provided for the suspension by the elders of persons guilty of scandalous offences." R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 214.



in his third anti-episcopal pamphlet, *Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence against Smectymnuus*, he was now fully committed to Presbyterianism, both as an instrument of government in a church beset by sectarianism and as a remedy for the moral lapses from which even the saints were not immune.

20. From our distance it is easy to recognize the economic and social factors in the Puritans' quarrel with the bishops. Their strength, says Mr. Trevor-Roper in *Archbishop Laud* (p. 296), did not reside "in the ridiculous doctrines of a few hysterical pamphleteers"; it lay "in the inarticulate refusal of the preponderant classes in the country to cooperate with a government intent on limiting their power." The bishops' position—their influence in politics, their wealth (diminished though it was), their opposition to popular preaching and preachers, and their tightening support of Charles as he tried to rule without Parliament—all seemed intolerable in a country that was making its first attempt to create modern fiscal, political, and religious institutions. At the moment of its publication in 1642, Milton's *Reason of Church Government* went very far toward realizing the full revolutionary character of the Puritan movement, for it ended with a warning that the king himself would not be permitted to stop the resolve of the Puritans to end episcopacy.

21. In 1642 the bishops still bore the brunt of revolutionary discontent. A reborn Martin Marprelate assailed the "sinfull, the unlawfull, the broken, the unnaturall, false and bastardly governors of the Church; to wit, Archb. and Bishops." In 1628 Leighton's *Appeal* (p. 81) had laid all the ills in England's history to the bishops, and called the roll of archbishops of Canterbury who had been traitors to their kings: "Anselme against Rufus, Beckett vexeing Henry the second, Langton casting awry king and state. . . ." Nine years later William Prynne elaborated this argument in *A Breviate of the Prelates intollerable usurpations, both upon the Kings Prerogative Royal, and the Subjects Liberties*. "One keepeth the privy Seale, another the great Seale, the third is Confessor, that is to say,

a privy traitor, a secret Iudas," Prynne snarled (p. 29) in a passage which throws light upon Milton's final attack in *Church Government* upon the bishops as "the greatest underminers and betrayers of the monarch." Prynne represented them as ravaging the country to strengthen their positions at court. If Milton's onslaught on the 'blind mouths' in *Lycidas* seems severe, we should compare it with Prynne's appeal to Charles to save "his poore, innocent, harmlesse, woored sheeps and lambes out of the Iawes of these Bite-sheepes, these ravenous evening wolves (Habakuk i, 8) (though in Sheepes cloathing) who devour and prey upon them." To unmask the episcopal shepherds as wolves was the main object of Puritan pamphleteering. The chief obstacle was the traditional prestige of the episcopate, of which Milton tried in the second book of *Church Government* to prove that the inertia and snobbery of the masses enabled an ambitious minority of the clergy to take advantage. His position and language were no more extreme than those of the Scottish divine, Robert Baillie, whose *Unlawfulness and Danger of Limited prelatie* (1641, p. 15) said roundly that "A Pastor no sooner becometh a Prelate, but he beginneth to howl with the Wolves, although he looke like a Shepheard." At Laud's impeachment before the House of Lords, Sir Harbottle Grimstone indicted him and all his supporters as "the men that should have fed Christ's Flocke, but they are the Wolves that devoured them."

22. With better reason than some revolutionary movements do, English Puritanism regarded itself as "the wave of the future". Its leaders accepted themselves as heaven's champions in the European Reformation which had disrupted though it had not fully revolutionized the English church. Because they thought of their own lives in the light of Calvinism's central doctrine of God's absolute predestination of every soul to bliss or woe, they saw the chariots of the Lord and his horsemen on their side against the bishops. Like Milton in his first anti-episcopal tract, they interpreted history apocalyptically, deriving their ideas of the past and future of the church much more literally than he did from the Book of Revelation.

The centuries between the Emperor Constantine's recognition of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire in 312 and the Lutheran revolt in 1517 seemed to him "so many dark ages, wherein the huge, overshadowing train of error hath almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the church." Protestant commentators differed about the mysteries in Revelation, but they agreed that the figure in the twelfth chapter of "a woman clothed with the sun" represented the true church, and that her flight "into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God," and where she hides from a "great dragon, . . . that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan," plainly referred (to use Milton's words) to the "general apostasy" which ended at the Reformation. In English anti-episcopal literature this interpretation had an interesting history. As early as 1614 a pamphleteer who made one of the first popular appeals for religious toleration, Leonard Busher, in his *Religious Peace* (p. 6), built a Utopian hope that the bishops would surrender their 'antichristian power' on the belief that "the Lord . . . hath showed by the mouth of his holy servant Iohn, that the woman (meaning the church) sholde fleye into the wildernes for a tyme . . . from the presence and persecution of the Serpent." This outlook on history easily lapsed into bigotry, but it could rise to enlightened idealism. Bigots and idealists alike were looking forward to the imminent fulfilment of St. John's prophecy<sup>3</sup> that Satan would be bound and Christ reign for a thousand years on earth. They interpreted the symbol in the preceding chapter of a white horse and its rider, who was "called faithful and true," as Milton did in the Conclusion of *Church Government*, to mean that Christ, or Truth, would presently prevail in the world. In 1642 popular apocalyptic faith rose to a fever, and the Fifth Monarchy men produced a flood of fanatical tracts. Men of wide culture shared the popular faith in the approaching, earthly reign of Christ. Lord Brooke's essay on *The Nature of Truth* (1640) ended with a short survey of the mass of Protestant commentary on Revelation, and stated its

<sup>3</sup> Revelation xx, 2.

author's preference for the view that Christ, as Truth, was to return and govern this world. The idea, as Lord Brooke and Milton entertained it, was no more a superstition than the faith in their own epoch and the immediate future which all convinced revolutionaries feel when their causes are prospering. Entangled though it was with their belief in the prophecies in Revelation, it was essentially an expression of their faith—partly Platonic, partly Christian—in the approaching triumph of Truth over the falsehood that they saw embodied around them in the English church and state.

23. In this revolutionary crisis the bishops turned to the past. Hall traced<sup>4</sup> the origin of his order to the first archbishop of Canterbury and sadly asked, "Alas, what strange fury possesseth the minds of ignorant, unstable men, that they should thus headily desire, and sue to shake off so sacred and well grounded an Institution?" To this the Smectymnuans replied<sup>5</sup> by calling "the antiquitie of episcopacie" the bishops' "great *Goliah*, the masterpiece, and indeed the onely argument with which they thinke to silence all opposers." In general, the Puritans made as intelligent use of history as the Episcopalians did; but in this case the Smectymnuans chose to oppose truth to the authority of the past and to argue that "Christ is Truth, and not Custome, and Custome without Truth is a mouldy error: and as Sir Francis Bacon saith, 'Antiquity without Truth is a Cypher without a Figure.'" So the quarrel became one between "antiquarians," as Milton contemptuously called those "hinderers of reformation," and the revolutionary Puritans, who paradoxically rested their case upon the New Testament and the practice of the primitive Church.

24. Puritan prejudice against "antiquarians" was no new thing. A beautifully naive confession of it occurs as early as Leonard Busher's plea in *Religious Peace* (1614, p. 19) for the largest freedom for "every person or persons, yea Jewes and Papists, to write, dispute, confer, and reason, print or publish any matter touching religion, either for or against whomsoever,

<sup>4</sup> In *An Humble Remonstrance*, p. 9. Cf. ¶ 17 above.

<sup>5</sup> In *An Answer to . . . "A Humble Remonstrance,"* pp. 19 and 91.

always provided they alledge no fathers, for prooffe of any point of religion, but onely the holy scriptures." In the trial of the bishops before the bar of public opinion an appeal to the Bible, which everyone knew, was sure to prevail. The patristic works available in English translations interested only a limited audience, and the Fathers of greatest weight in the dispute—Ignatius, Origen, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, and St. Jerome—had been translated only in fragments. To know them at all seemed to the less literate Puritans to smack of "antiquity," for in most left wing pulpits they were taboo; yet in that age of scholarship ignorance of them could hardly be tolerated in champions of either party. The Smectymnuans wavered between dislike of them and confidence in their own powers to interpret them to the disadvantage of the bishops. "They that would bring in a new government," said Selden, "would very fain perswade us, they meet it in Antiquity; thus they interpret Presbyters, when they meet the word in the Fathers. Other professions," for example, alchemy, he added, "likewise pretend to Antiquity." Selden's irony was deserved, but it was not deserved only by the Puritans. An illustration of the vulnerability of both parties to it is a skirmish about St. Jerome in which the Smectymnuans, Bishop Hall, and many earlier controversialists took part. It is worth notice because it explains the allusions to Jerome in *Church Government* I, v, and also because it illustrates the fact that almost all the passages cited from the Fathers in that pamphlet were already generally familiar bones of contention.

25. The discussion of St. Jerome mainly centered on his commentaries on St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus, to both of whom the Apostle gave vaguely general responsibility for the church in Crete. To understand it, we should read those letters, especially I Timothy iii, and the great characterization of an ideal bishop in the first chapter of Titus. When Jerome wrote his commentaries on Paul's Epistles in his retreat near Bethlehem, early in the fifth century, his translation of the Bible into the Latin version known as the Vulgate and his biographies of many of the worthies of the early church enabled

him to write with great authority. His remarks about the bishops in the primitive church were, of course, made without any thought of the weight that was to be given to every word a thousand years later. Their drift is not unfairly represented in Calvin's resumé of them in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* I, iv, 2. In the commentary on Titus, Calvin tells us that Jerome denies that originally bishops and priests were separate orders and declares that before "by the instinction of the Divell there were dissensions in religion, . . . Churches were governed by the common counsell of the Elders. Afterward, that the seeds of dissensions might be plucked up, all the care was committed to one man. As therefore the Priests doe know, that by custome of the Church they are subject to him that is set over them: so let the Bishops know, that they are above the Priests, rather by custome than by the truth of the Lords disposing." Calvin recognized no distinction between priests and bishops in the early church except the duty of the latter to convoke provincial and general councils, and he laid great stress on the evidence in Jerome, Cyprian, and some other Fathers that both priests and bishops were chosen only with the consent of all the clergy, often with that of the emperors, and sometimes with that of the people generally. This remained the prevailing Presbyterian interpretation of St. Jerome's letters and commentaries on Timothy and Titus. In the Smectymnuans' *Answer* to Bishop Hall we find Jerome's original Latin in a long excerpt from his commentary on Titus. Beside it is a translation giving the reader to understand that, "A Presbyter and a Bishop is the same: and before there were through Devils instinct divisions in Religion, . . . the Churches were governed by the Common Counsell of the Presbyters. . . . So let the Bishops know, that it is more from custome, then from any true dispensation from the Lord, that they are above the Presbyters, and that they ought to rule the Church in common."

26. In the quarrel over the weight of patristic evidence the word *custom* became a sword in the hands of the Puritans and a shield for the bishops. Hooker's defense of tradition in *The*

*Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594-97), it now seems, should have made the shield permanently more than a match for the sword. Other conservatives, however, lacked Hooker's insight into history and suffered from the uncritical reverence for the past which Milton called "antiquarianism." John Bridges, the Elizabethan Bishop of Oxford, in his *Defence of the Government Established in the Church of England* (1587), stated Calvin's appeal to St. Jerome more adequately than he answered it. He was followed in 1593 by Thomas Bilson, then Warden of Winchester College, later Bishop of Worcester and of Winchester, to whom we have a contemptuous allusion in *Church Government*, II, 1. His *Perpetuall Government of Christes Church. Wherein are handled: The fatherly superioritie which God first established in the Patriarkes for the guiding of his Church* (1593) stated the Presbyterian interpretation of Jerome on Titus essentially as Calvin had done, but amplified Bridges' reply to Calvin by a long catalogue of the bishops, beginning from the times of the Apostles, at Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. In Bilson's hands the argument from tradition became very much like the doctrine of apostolic succession of which Archbishop Laud was the uncompromising champion in Milton's time.

27. Bilson was followed by a more formidable controversialist, Edward Brerewood, the first professor of Astronomy at Gresham College, and also an historian whose scholarship had admitted him to the Old Society of Antiquaries. He was a theologian too, and before going to Gresham College had taught Divinity at Oxford. At his death in 1613 he left a manuscript called *The Patriarchall Government of the Ancient Church*, which was published in 1641 together with Archbishop Ussher's *Geographicall and Hisstorically Disquisition, touching the Lydian or Proconsular Asia, and the seven Metropolitically Churches contained in it*, to which Milton refers jointly with Brerewood's tract. *Certaine Briefe Treatises* was the collective title under which these and five other little essays by men like Richard Hooker, Lancelot Andrewes, and Martin Bucer were published. Brerewood undertook to prove that the early

church not only was governed by bishops, archbishops and patriarchs, but that England itself had been a part of the early ecclesiastical organization quite as definitely as it had been a part of the Roman Empire. Every Roman province, he argued (p. 113), had an archbishop as surely as it had a proconsul to govern it. England, "being of it selfe (as it was) one of the VI *Diocesses* of the West Empire, had a *Primate* of its owne: which (as I take) was the Arch-Bishop of *Yorke*." Archbishop Ussher's contention, which Milton calls "meting out the Lydian proconsular Asia," was allied to Brerewood's, but he relied upon Biblical and not merely "antiquarian" authority. He took his stand upon the interpretation of the word "angels" in the addresses to the angels of the seven Lydian churches in Revelation, as meaning "bishops," and as implying that while St. John was still alive Asia Minor was formally organized into seven bishoprics. This precarious argument was an old one, and it was assailed by the Smectymnuans on the ground that the word 'angel' has its own, ordinary meaning in the Apocalypse. In reviving it, Ussher wrote with perfect sincerity, but with a skilled controversialist's appreciation of his advantage in appealing, not to the Fathers or to tradition, but to the Bible, and to one of its most popular books among the Puritans.

28. In *An Humble Remonstrance* it is interesting to find Bishop Hall making use of Ussher's argument and also retracing the steps in the old quarrel that centered around St. Jerome. "If our Bishops challenge any other spirituall power than was by Apostolique Authority delegated unto, and required by Timothy and Titus and the Angels of the Seven Asian Churches," he cried (p. 23), "let them be disclaimed as usurpers." The Puritans, he was aware, would not admit his interpretation of "angels," but he hoped to dissuade them from "borrowing St. Jerome's phrase" to prove "the superiority of Bishops over Presbyters to be grounded rather upon the custome of the Church than any appointment of Christ." Hall's manner of approach was compromising, but he was no less anxious than Archbishop Laud to secure his order by establishing its clear descent from the primitive church. He declared that if



his opponents would "grant (as they shall be forced) that this custome was of the Church Apostolicall, and had its rise with the knowledge, approbation, practice of those inspired Legates of Christ, . . . there is no great dissonance in the opinions as may be worthy of a quarrell." In language which tried, but failed to be disarmingly gentle, Hall implied what Laud said roundly at the trial of Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne, when he accused them of trying to propagate "malignant principles, and to introduce a Parity in the Church or Common-wealth."

29. Laud's warning of political danger ahead in the Presbyterian demand for equality among the clergy recalls James I's dictum: "No bishop, no king." We must be on our guard, however, against allowing the political implications of the quarrel to confuse us as we try to judge, or at least to understand the bishops, appealing to "antiquity," and the Puritans, appealing to Scripture. If we are leftward in our political thinking, we are apt to reason, as Professor Jordan does,<sup>6</sup> that, because "the disintegration of uniformity into sectarianism was, in fact, so weakening the established religion that toleration and clerical impotency were to be achieved in that direction," a really wise and courageous man could not have failed to oppose the bishops. Liberals whose knowledge of Calvin goes beyond an acquaintance with his doctrine of predestination, are likely to agree with M. Abel Lefranc<sup>7</sup> that modern social philosophy itself is rooted into the last chapters of the *Institutes* (text of 1541): "Of Christian Liberty," "Of Ecclesiastical Authority," and "Of Civil Government and the Christian Life." On the other hand, conservatives who share Mr. T. S. Eliot's outlook are likely to agree with him in finding Milton personally no less "unsatisfactory" than other skirmishers in the war against the bishops, "from the moralist's point of view, or from the theologian's point of view, or from that of the political philosopher."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England, 1603-1640*, p. 481.

<sup>7</sup> *Grands écrivains de la Renaissance*, p. 306.

<sup>8</sup> "A Note on the Verse of John Milton," in *Essays and Studies of the English Association* XXI, p. 32.

30. Mr. Eliot does not mention the historian's point of view, which is, or ought to be the prime concern of students. The first step toward it is to try to sympathize with the bishops in appealing as they did to the Fathers, and the second step is to try to understand why the reformers challenged them so confidently on Biblical ground. Unfortunately, very few of us are interested in the patristic record of the ecclesiastical polity of Christianity as it meandered down the centuries from precedent to precedent. Though Milton anticipated modern contempt for "the muddy waters of the Fathers, where no plummet can reach bottom," he had read the best of them with enough respect to laugh at "the ferrets" of their indexes who tried to use them against him without having mastered them. Privately, his attitude toward them may not have been very unlike that of Erasmus, who edited St. Jerome and valued the great Greek and Latin Fathers—particularly Origen, Basil, Jerome and Ambrose—yet warned that even the greatest of them should be read discriminatingly, "for they were men ignorant of some things, and mistaken in others."

31. Most modern readers are readier to share Milton's doubts of the Fathers than they are to approve his reverence for the Bible. The bibliolatry which made it an absolute standard of truth and guide of life is a familiar historic fact, but we have forgotten what a hold the Bible had on the imagination and on the consciences of his contemporaries. We have forgotten the long struggle to get it translated into German, English, and French, and to make the service of the Church of England correspond to "the Word of God," as the Canons of 1604 solemnly declared that, at last, it had been brought to do. The reformation of religion "according to the practice of the best Reformed Churches and the Word of God" was the one object which the Scots and English avowed in Edinburgh in August, 1643, when they had failed to bring their discussions of the Solemn League and Covenant to any more definite conclusion. The reformers knew how to interpret that decision. Their position was that of an anonymous tract which appeared in 1641 with the title *The True Form of Church Government*,

*First Instituted by Christ, Now Used and Practised in all the Reformed Churches of Germanie, France and Scotland: humbly presented to the High and Honorable Court of Parliament. . . . Plainly proved by Scripture, rectified reason, and the Testimonie of the Church, some hundreds of yeares after the Apostles time, and the generall consent of the Churches rightly reformed in the latter times, contrary to the Romish, and our Archiepiscopall Government.* The "generall proposition" of this pamphlet was "That the Word of God describeth perfectly unto us the forme of Governing the Church which is lawfull, and the Officers which are to execute the same; from which no Christian Church ought to swerve." The proposition was familiar, for it had been affirmed in Leighton's *Appeal*, and the anonymous writer prided himself on defending the very principles which had been laid down sixty years earlier by the Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, Thomas Cartwright, and his friend, William Travers, to whom Hooker replied in *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. In Leighton's *Appeal* (p. 190) the dogmatic Puritan faith in the Bible as furnishing a complete pattern for church government had been stated with perfect clarity. While the Scripture left men free to live under whatever kind of civil government they chose, Leighton thought, "no sooner ordained God a Church, either under the *Law* or the *Gospel*, but so soone he prescribed a *platforme of government for it*." Thinking of this kind explains the Puritan readiness to find a very practical and mandatory kind of truth in the Bible. "Truth," Milton says in *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, is "the daughter not of time, but of Heaven, only bred up here below in Christian hearts between two grave and holy nurses, the doctrine and discipline of the gospel."

32. In language of this kind some modern readers can hear the voice of a prophet; others may hear that of a fanatic or of an astute politician. Milton's life-long study of the Bible and his passionate interest in both its spirit and its letter are not to be judged in the light of his anti-episcopal tracts alone. When their effects have been traced through all his prose, including his *Christian Doctrine*, and through his poetry, a

judgment may be possible, but it will not be easy even then. In *Church Government* the prophetic attitude toward Scripture is dominant. In the second chapter of Book I Milton turns to the prophet Ezekiel for support for the Presbyterian form of church government, and he goes so far as to suggest that God inspired the specifications for a new Jewish temple in Ezekiel's fortieth chapter less for the Hebrews in rebuilding ancient Jerusalem than for the benefit of Englishmen, "to signify the inward beauty and splendor of the Christian church" under the Presbyterian pattern. The Old Testament prophecy is used as is St. John's vision of the New Jerusalem a few lines above. Then Milton goes on to the still more surprising suggestion that St. Paul, when he wrote his First Epistle to Timothy, was deliberately leaving a blueprint of ecclesiastical polity for contemporary Europe. Timothy, says Milton, understood Paul's mind too well to need to have his view of church government explained. In taking this position, Milton points out that he was on common ground with Hooker in *Certaine Briefe Treatises*, and that Hooker's interpretation of the entire epistle is based on a narrower and more literal view of its first chapter than his own.

33. Today we honor Hooker for having written his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* with the hope of tempering Puritan bibliolatry with a reasonable respect for tradition. In his great book (though not in his very unrepresentative essay in *Certain Briefe Treatises*, which Milton attacked) Hooker far excelled Milton in his anti-episcopal tracts as an interpreter of the history of the Christian Church and of the authority of the Bible. Yet, great though Hooker's service to rationalism may have been by his stress upon the "law whereunto by the light of reason men find themselves bound in that they are men," and by his assertion that "it is an error to think that the only law which God hath appointed unto men . . . is the sacred scripture," he was careful not to challenge "the law which God himself hath supernaturally revealed." In spite of their different temperaments and purposes, both Milton and Hooker belong among the founders of modern empirical thought. Neither

of them stood outside of that "appeal to the origins of Christianity" which Professor Whitehead regards as quite as unescapable in the field of religion in the seventeenth century as "the appeal to experiment and the inductive method of reasoning" then became in the field of natural science.<sup>9</sup> Milton's determination always to interpret the Bible in the light of "the word within the breast" made him as important a contributor as Hooker to the growth of modern empiricism.

34. In comparison with Hooker's *Laws* Milton's pamphleteering attempt to make a philosophical defense of Presbyterianism in *Church Government* is at a hopeless disadvantage. The comparison is hardly fair, for Milton was not writing a treatise, and he was obviously addressing what he hoped would be a wider and more popular audience than Hooker's. His motives and controversial methods may be more fairly open to question than Hooker's. Yet Hooker, as Professor Sisson has shown, was generously subsidized by Edwin Sandys, with Archbishop Whitgift's approval, to write his *Laws*. Milton wrote as a volunteer. Hooker's essential disinterestedness is, of course, unquestionable, but it should also be remembered in Milton's favor that Edward Phillips' description of his uncle as "undaunted . . . in declaring his true sentiments to the world" applies to the writer of *Church Government* as well as it does to the old man who wrote *A Ready and Easy Way*.

35. Milton's assertion of a divine commission to write his tract as we find it in the autobiographical preface to Book II is not in harmony with modern taste. We accept it largely for the vague light that it throws upon his already conscious purpose to write his major poems. If we choose to do so, we may see egotism, if not arrogance, in these amazing poetical hopes, as we are also at liberty to do in his defense of his character against the aspersions of the Halls in *An Apology for Smectymnuus*. Instead of following investigators like Herr Mutschmann in that direction, however, we shall be better advised to follow Professor Gilman's lead in recognizing

<sup>9</sup> *Science and the Modern World*, p. 57.

in this preface an ethical argument for Milton's cause and a testimony by the writer in harmony with Puritan ideals. The classical tradition in oratory obliged every debater to make the "ethical" appeal as powerfully as possible, and Milton's pride and sensitivity both prompted him to do so. The apology in Milton's preface is hardly more loosely attached to the body of his discourse than the vindications of themselves which Cicero prefixed to his oration on the Manilian Law and which Winston Churchill used to begin his speech to the United States Senate.

36. Milton's acknowledgement that he wrote prose with his left hand has long been accepted as a truism, and its force in his ethical argument has been overlooked. While the strength of his right hand was one of the consecrated myths of English literature, the reputation of his left suffered. The recent attack upon his reputation as a poet has led to a re-examination of his prose. Sir Herbert Grierson has convincingly pleaded that the three great defenses of the English people and of himself seemed to Milton to fulfil the very purpose to "celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church," which he announces in *Church Government*. Joseph Milton French has brought the anti-episcopal tracts into an unfamiliar but fair and favorable light by looking at them as, in part at least, works of satire. In ironical force and in verbal dexterity few satirists have equalled Milton. His violence seems to us unsportsman-like, and some stomachs which have no difficulty with the drama of his contemporaries are too delicate for his coarseness. By modern standards in these matters his case may be hopeless, and it is not fundamentally altered by Professor Diekhoff's evidence<sup>10</sup> that he was "quite genuinely worried about the charges of indecency brought against him as a result of his use of the invective which was one of the conventions of pamphlet warfare." No one familiar with those conventions from some

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<sup>10</sup> *Milton on Himself*, p. xvii.

reading of the Marprelate tracts<sup>11</sup> would rashly condemn Milton for his violence and scurrility. Neither of those qualities in his work was indecent, for they were both part of the decorum of controversy. He lived in an age when even kings could call their enemies Antichrist, as James I did the King of Spain, expecting afterwards to be forgiven on the plea that he had spoken by the license of controversy. Today, however, the satirical element—especially in a tract which set itself as definitely philosophical an object as *The Reason of Church Government* did—is hard to accept. The tract must be taken for what it is—the work of a man who took peculiar pleasure in Aristotle's definition of "anger and laughter" as the "two most rational faculties of the human mind." At least in part, it must be judged by its power to make us share his indignation against his enemies, and to laugh at them with him sometimes even after they have lain in their graves for three hundred years.

### III. THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE OF DIVORCE

37. If, during the Christmas holidays of 1860, an ardent abolitionist from Philadelphia had visited a Virginia planter who happened to have been in debt for a long time to his father; and if he had married the planter's sixteen-year-old daughter and brought her home with a promise of a handsome dowry; and if, just before the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter, the girl had gone home for a visit and thereafter 'refused' to return across the Federal lines to her husband; his situation

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<sup>11</sup> For the record of John Penry, the Elizabethan who was most largely responsible for the first popular attack on the bishops and was finally hanged as a traitor in 1593, and for an account of the scurrilous pamphlet-war in which Thomas Nashe and John Lyly took part against him, the reader should consult *The Marprelate Tracts*, edited by William Pierce, London, 1911.

would have been much like Milton's when *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* was published in July, 1643. Of his wife, Mary Powell, and of her Royalist father, Richard Powell of Forest Hill, Oxfordshire, and of her courtship there in May and June, 1642, we know little. The date of the courtship, however, was at last firmly established by Mr. B. A. Wright in 1931.<sup>1</sup> The old fable that Milton wrote his first divorce tract during his honeymoon has been proved as false as it is improbable.

38. To understand *The Doctrine and Discipline* it is not necessary to take sides between Mary Powell and Milton. We are past the Victorian days when he could do no wrong and she, accordingly, must have been "one of those women—more common in England than perhaps in any other country—of a dull, sluggish temperament, with little powers of conversation, and requiring strong external excitement, such as dancing, to rouse them to anything like enjoyment." Perhaps we shall also forget our psychological interpretations of Milton as having been more or less the prig which Herr Schucking recognizes in the Adam of *Paradise Lost*. In one form or another, the tradition that he asked too much of Mary Powell is perennial. It goes back to the surmise of the anonymous author of *An Answer to a Book, intituled, The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*,<sup>2</sup> that the schoolmaster in Aldersgate Street counted no "woman to due conversation accessible, . . . except she (could) speak Hebrew, Greek, and Latine, & French, and dispute against the Canon law as well as" he could. We do not know how much Milton expected of Mary Powell when he married her. When she rejoined him (to become the mother of the child that was born in July, 1646) he does not seem to have asked anything of her. He must obviously have made only moderate demands on the second wife, whom he married

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<sup>1</sup> "Milton's First Marriage," *M.L.R.* XXVI, 383-400, and XXVII, 6-23.

<sup>2</sup> This interesting pamphlet is reprinted in W. R. Parker's *Milton's Contemporary Reputation*. His introduction has an admirable account of the publication of the divorce tracts and of the replies to them in press and pulpit.



four years after Mary's death, and mourned a few months later:

Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd  
So clear, as in no face with more delight.

The first marriage must simply be accepted as a mistake for which Milton and the bride's parents were about equally responsible.

39. Casual readers are amused at the 'cries of pain' in the divorce tracts. Milton's contempt for his wife's mind was as humorless as that of most husbands who plead incompatibility. For readers who are comfortably conscious of their own sense of humor, his pain will seem no less funny when they learn that the prince of philosophical divorcees, Shelley's father-in-law, William Godwin, solemnly pronounced Milton a consummate master of the problems of divorce, and said that he had "discussed them with a clearness and strength of argument that it would be difficult to excel." It is easy to jump to the conclusion that Milton was as much of a Utopian as Godwin, and some modern admirers of his divorce tracts are Utopian enough themselves to encourage that mistake. One of them, writing in *The Nineteenth Century* in 1907, and seeking aid and comfort from Milton's "brave attempt to establish the marriage laws on a juster basis," looked forward to divorce by consent in the not distant future, or as soon as the "wave of mammon-worship has swept by, and men and women bestow the same care on their characters that they now give to their incomes." Milton would have thought this reasoning preposterous, if not hypocritical. Divorce by consent seemed to him a much more urgent and practicable reform than any attack on the acquisitive instinct could be. In *Doctrine and Discipline* II, xiv, he said, in answer to those who held that Christians should be as uncompromising against divorce as the Church had traditionally been against lending money for interest, that usury—"so much as is permitted by the magistrate and demanded with common equity—is neither against the word of God, nor the rule of charity." The strength of his position was just its independ-

ence of any more sweeping change in human institutions or in the imperfect human nature that he knew.

40. To think of Milton as a Utopian is not the way to understand his divorce tracts. He was no more a believer in "divorce at pleasure" (Prynne said that he was) than he was a worshipper of the Canon Law. Like Erasmus in his *Commentary on the Beatitudes*, he held that Christ's rule against divorce on any ground except adultery was no more legally enforceable than the command to turn the other cheek. Again like Erasmus, he held that to Christ the term *adultery* meant very much more than a physical act. Those who followed the Canon Law seemed Utopian to him, and he pressed the argument against them by a skillful appeal to his Puritan public. With them his object must be to make both the spirit and letter of scripture support his position. In this book there is not room for his scriptural arguments, nor for much beside the opening chapters in the first book of *The Doctrine and Discipline* as they stand in the second edition, where he carefully amplified them to do justice to his central ideas. Enough of his discussion of the Biblical texts is included, however, to show how boldly, if not unscrupulously, he took advantage of Erasmus' pregnant observation (in the words of his sixteenth century translator, N. Lesse<sup>3</sup>) that "the scripture is perplex and doubtfull, as well in thys, as in some other thynges," and that "the church had with her the spirit of her spouse, and that nothinge coulde be done amys, that by that spirit should be ordeyned to the health of man." If Milton seems too liberal in availing himself of Erasmus' permission to twist texts for humanity's good, he at least never allowed his zeal to impair his judgment. He had no sympathy for the fanatics who divorced "at pleasure" or at the behest of "the spirit." One of his wisest chapters, the last in Book I, takes the modern psychologist's attitude toward them by asking whether, since

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<sup>3</sup> Lesse translated Erasmus' *Commentary* on part of Corinthians as *The Censure and Iudgement of the Famous Clerke Erasmus of Rotterdam: Whyther dyvorcement betweene man and wyfe stondeth with the Lawe of God.* (1550 ?), pp. 4-5.

"that sort of men who follow Anabaptism, Familism, Antinomianism, and other fanatic dreams be such most commonly as are by nature addicted to religion, of life also not debauched," it may not "come with reason into the thoughts of a wise man whether all this proceed not partly, if not chiefly, from the restraint of some lawful liberty." One of history's injustices is the charge of having led "a sect of divorcers" which was first thrown at Milton in 1648, was repeated in *The Censure of the Rota* in 1660, and is occasionally heard yet.

41. The right approach to *The Doctrine and Discipline* is through the related literature—both sane and fanatical—which lay between it and Erasmus' Commentaries on Corinthians. Until Professor Haller's study of that field is published in full, many aspects of Milton's tract will remain obscure; but with the light that we have we can see that its structure and reasoning were largely determined by that debate and by the Biblical passages on which it hinged. Milton's second divorce tract, *The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce*, which was published not later than 6 August, 1644, neatly corroborated *The Doctrine and Discipline* out of the mouth of the sixteenth century German reformer who ended his days as a professor of theology at Cambridge. When his first tract went to press, Milton had not heard of the revolutionary book *On the Kingdom of Christ* which Bucer wrote expressly for Edward VI in 1550. His hasty translation of a part of it as *The Judgment of Martin Bucer* abundantly proved that his own Erasmian view of divorce had had the blessing of a theologian and prophet of the Reformation in Germany whom, in the "pure times" of Edward VI, England had delighted to honor.

42. The more interested we become in the literary and social backgrounds of Milton's tracts, the more inclined we are to question Mary Powell's part in shaping them, and to see them as the outcome of a tradition extending from Erasmus to Milton's contemporaries, Grotius and Selden. In *Bucer* Milton acknowledged that the former's *Commentary on Matthew* had emboldened him to write *The Doctrine and Discipline*, and his appeal to the principles of the latter's *Law of Nature and*

*Nations* is clearly implicit in that tract. Mr. Chilton Powell has gone so far as to deny that the marriage was in any way connected with the divorce pamphlets. He sees them—much as Milton describes them in *The Second Defence*—as a natural sequel to the anti-episcopal tracts. Since 1576, Mr. Powell shows,<sup>4</sup> there had been agitation in Parliament for the legal recognition of marriage as a civil contract which first came in 1653, and for the divorce by consent between the dissatisfied partners which was practiced and defended by some sects among the Independents. It is going rather too far to believe, as Mr. Powell does, that, because Milton might have obtained a divorce on grounds of desertion in 1643, he wrote *The Doctrine and Discipline* in a purely impersonal spirit. This supposition is flattering to him, but against it we have the word of two of his early biographers as well as the too evidently personal tone of the pamphlet itself. Yet it will pay, with Milton himself as guide, to trace its reasoning and even its strong feeling back beyond Bucer to Erasmus, whose “eloquent and right Christian discourse on this argument, not disagreeing in effect from Bucer,” Milton regretted in his Postscript to *Bucer* that he had not been able to subjoin.

43. Between them, Erasmus and Bucer explain why *The Doctrine and Discipline* opens and closes with indictments of the Canon Law, and why its first book faces the conflict between Moses’ allowance of “a bill of divorcement” and Christ’s repeated denunciations of divorce for any cause except adultery, while the second book advances the principle of judging both Moses’ law and Christ’s by the Christian rule of charity. A digression in Erasmus’ *Commentary* on I Corinthians vii, tries to discredit the canonists’ practice in divorce cases on the ground of inconsistency that goes back to the writings of the Fathers of the Church on that subject. After this attempt to undermine the structure of the Canon Law, Erasmus goes on to plead that somehow “it might be brought to pass that bi the authoritie of the churches, some remedy and helpe myght be provided for them whyche do lyve myserably and ungodly togyther with the

<sup>4</sup> *English Domestic Relations*, pp. 67–76.

greate peryl and daunger of bothe ther sowl helthes.”<sup>5</sup> One of the oddest and seemingly least candid of Milton’s arguments for divorce is the fear he expresses in *Doctrine I*, vii, lest without that remedy “the whole worship of a man’s life should languish and fade away beneath the weight of an immeasurable grief.” He makes the point, and makes it in just these terms, because Erasmus and others had made it before him. He was not trying to deal in paradoxes, and he must have been angry when in 1650 Bishop Hall insinuated<sup>6</sup> that his “licentious pamphlet” was an attempt to try the skill of some “great wit . . . in the maintenance of . . . so wild and improbable a paradox.” The fact is that, apart from his belief in the Biblical authorization of polygamy, which he reserved for discussion in the Latin of the *Christian Doctrine I*, x, Milton’s ideas about marriage and divorce can have seemed strange or extreme to none of his better-read contemporaries.

44. To his opponents, a man who took Milton’s view of divorce seemed involved in a hopeless attempt to reconcile the law of Moses—literally interpreted—with the words of Jesus on that subject. Essentially Milton’s position was that of simple acceptance of Moses’ rule in Deuteronomy xxiv, 1-2:

“When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife.”

What was Milton to do with Christ’s observation on this passage in Matthew v, 32: “Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery”? An influential writer on domestic questions, William Perkins, though he would have granted a divorce on

<sup>5</sup> *The Censure . . . of Erasmus* CVIII, v.

<sup>6</sup> In *Resolutions and Decisions of Divers Practical Cases of Conscience*, Decade IV, Case ii.

the ground of desertion which Mary Powell had given to Milton, still held that adultery was "the proper and just cause of divorce, which is not to be admitted for many other sins, although they be more grievous."<sup>7</sup> On the crucial matter of remarriage Perkins was discreetly vague. The conservative John Weemes denied that the passage in Deuteronomy permitted divorce on any ground but adultery. On the other side Milton took the position that Grotius did in his commentary on Matthew, 31-2. In *The Doctrine and Discipline* II, xviii, he cites Grotius' proof that the Deuteronomic bill of divorcement permitted divorce for an indeterminate variety of causes, as well as Grotius' interpretation of the words of Christ as simply a solemn counsel to those who contemplate divorce. Those words were never intended, said Grotius, "to constitute civil laws." They belong to the realm of natural law, which governs the spirit, rather than to that of civil law, which changes from civilization to civilization, and is seldom equitably formulated. Grotius regarded the civil law of the Roman emperors as the most equitable in all history because it made divorce for incompatibility possible but very difficult, and because it was rigorously impartial between the sexes. Moses' bill of divorcement is treated as Milton treats it in *The Doctrine and Discipline* II, viii, as a good institution which Christ was really trying in Matthew v, 31-2, to reestablish by rebuking the abuse of it which the Pharisees encouraged. The Biblical justification of this view is, of course, questionable; and Milton's position as he stated it in the first edition of *The Doctrine and Discipline* was jeeringly assailed by his anonymous answerer, who insisted that whichever way you take Christ's statement—"whether you make it a true interpretation of *Moses* law against the glosses of others, or take it as a new precept belonging to the law of the Gospell, yet will it be an impregnable prooffe against all effeminate and childish divorces, for disagreement and contrariety of mindes."<sup>8</sup> It was vain for Milton to

<sup>7</sup> *Christian Oeconomy*. The passage closes the chapter "Of Chastity."

<sup>8</sup> *An Answer to a Book, Intituled, The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, pp. 6-7.

reply that such reasoning was itself "a paradox . . . only hanging by the twined thread of one doubtful scripture," or to accuse his opponents of blasphemy for imagining that "he whose eyes cannot behold impurity, should in the book of his holy covenant, his most unpassionate law, give license and statute for controlled adultery."

45. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Milton's thought is this struggle to reconcile the law of Moses with the words of Christ in a fashion to justify his own position. In a strong article,<sup>9</sup> Mr. Arthur Barker has traced the painful development of his thought from what seems like confidence in the success of that effort in the first edition of *The Doctrine and Discipline* (July, 1643) to doubt of it and a tendency in the second edition (February, 1644) to lay increasing stress upon the Calvinistic doctrine that the Jewish ceremonial and civil laws had been revoked by the principle of Christian liberty. Mr. Barker sees the process going on in *Tetrachordon* and culminating in the demand that both Moses' law and Christ's should cease to be positive, literal, and prescriptive. He quotes Milton's question there: "If the law of Christ shall be written in our hearts, as was promised to the Gospel, Jeremiah, 31, how can this in the vulgar and superficial sense be a law of Christ, so far from being written in our hearts, that it injures and disallows not only the free dictates of nature and moral law, but of charity also and religion in our hearts? Our Saviour's doctrine is, that the end and the fulfilling of every command is charity." Mr. Barker sees a conscious reversal of Milton's thought as occurring between the writing of the first edition of *The Doctrine and Discipline* and the writing of *Tetrachordon*. He thinks of it as resulting from the influence of the doctrine of Christian liberty which Luther asserted and Calvin defined in *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* III, xix, as liberating Christians from the ceremonial and judicial law of Moses. In *Church Government* we have seen its influence at work encouraging Milton to deny the claims of the bishops to any justi-

<sup>9</sup> "Christian Liberty in Milton's Divorce Pamphlets," *M.L.R.* XXXV (1940), pp. 153-61. Cf. Sewell, *This Great Argument*, pp. 56-66.

fication for their order from Jewish ceremonial institutions. It is strange that in both the first and second editions of *The Doctrine and Discipline* he should have accepted the unchanging authority of the judicial law of Moses about divorce as an expression of the immutable, moral law of God. In the second edition, Book II, chapter xii, he says that precisely because the Mosaic rule of divorce was judicial, Christ (in Matthew v, 31) "cites not the law of Moses, but the licentious gloss which traduced the law." The whole drift of his argument, however, is against obedience to the letter of any law which the spirit dislikes, and toward the radical assertion of Christian liberty which he finally made in *Of Christian Doctrine*.

46. In this connection it is worth while to notice that the thought in *Tetrachordon* seems to commit Milton to positive faith in an at least qualified freedom of the will, or—as he characteristically calls it—gift of reason, which he professes in the chapter "Of Predestination" in *Of Christian Doctrine*. In *The Doctrine and Discipline* II, iii, in an amazing passage, he directly states his faith in predestination and, in a digression which shows how much preoccupied he was even then with the justification of God's ways to man, he goes on to point out that even Plato "taught of virtue and vice to be both the gift of divine destiny," and that Cicero took essentially the position of the Calvinistic predestinarians in believing that sin was its own just and ever-increasing punishment, hardening men's hearts to their final, utter alienation from God.

47. At some time between the writing of this passage in *The Doctrine and Discipline* and the writing of the chapter on predestination as we have it in *Of Christian Doctrine*, Milton's thinking was transformed; yet in his chapter there "Of God" he repeated exactly his earlier assertion that the free and almighty will of God never changes. Hence, as he says in the chapter "Of Christian Liberty" in *Of Christian Doctrine* I, xxvii although "the whole of the Mosaic law is abolished by the Gospel, . . . the sum and essence of the law is not, thereby, abrogated." In the chapter dealing with marriage (I, x.) he indicates how far the Mosaic law seemed to him



to have coincided with Christian liberty by reaffirming his faith that "God in his just and pure and holy law, has not only permitted divorce on a variety of grounds, but has even ratified it in some cases, and enjoined it in others, under the severest penalties."

48. The development of Milton's conception of Christian liberty between the first edition of *The Doctrine and Discipline* and *Of Christian Doctrine* is more interesting than his theological justification of divorce, for the light that it throws upon his justification of God's ways to man in *Paradise Lost*. His justification of those ways on Plato's authority suggests that he was already moving away from orthodox predestinarianism toward the view of human freedom which expresses itself in the aphorism that character determines destiny rather than destiny character. This latter is the view in *Areopagitica*. The passage in question there implies that Adam's descendants have a very considerable share still remaining to them in the freedom of the will which he abused and—according to all but the most heretical thinkers—either lost outright or seriously impaired for his descendants. This development in Milton's thought between *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and *Areopagitica* is usually traced to the disillusion of his first marriage. Masson had no doubt that his characteristically affirmative morality became fully developed in 1643 as a part of his reaction to "the wrench in his life caused by his unhappy marriage."<sup>10</sup> There may be truth in that view, but other forces were shaping Milton's thinking. His ideas about both divorce and Christian liberty reflected much in the public discussion going on around him. The correspondence stands out clearly in a paragraph from *The Ancient Bounds* (1645) which Professor Woodhouse reprints in *Puritanism and Liberty*.<sup>11</sup> Liberty of conscience is presented there as giving every Christian the "right of free, yet modest, judging and accepting what he holds," and also as vindicating "a necessary advantage to the truth." Then, after a word professing Over-

<sup>10</sup> *Life of Milton* III, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> P. 247.

ton's faith in "one truth" and his disapproval of "variety of opinion," the argument moves on to illustrate its point by making the Jewish liberty of divorce a symbol of Christian liberty in all things:

Moses permitted divorce to the Jews, notwithstanding the hardness of their hearts; so must this liberty be granted to men (within certain bounds) though it may be abused to wanton opinions more than were to be wished.

Milton's influence, of course, may have been responsible for this passage, but it is likely to have been an independent expression of the attractive idea.

49. Milton appealed to Christian liberty less because his book provoked the opposition of men like Herbert Palmer, the divine who told Parliament in a sermon on a day of humiliation in August, 1644, that it deserved to be burnt, than because he did not expect it to produce much practical effect. Recent discussion has stressed Milton's surprise at the public indifference to his pamphlets, but an attentive reader will find *The Doctrine and Discipline* imbued, like all his more serious work, with the expectation of fit audience, though few. His first sentence acknowledges that expectation and turns it into a compliment to Parliament. Custom, he says, is the world's most persuasive teacher. From the majority of his public Milton looked for only the most lethargic response. Let Parliament then boldly take the lead that revolutionaries must always be prepared to take. Their enemy and his is simply custom, or—as we would say—public inertia and the national folkways, which always shun the sceptical scrutiny of reason. His two opening paragraphs treat Custom as an ally of Error, an "allegory"—as he calls it—with which he evidently expected his audience to be familiar. He expected them, perhaps, to remember a sermon by one of Edward VI's preachers, Christopher Goodman, a part of which he was later to incorporate into *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. Its title was *How Superior Powers ought to be Obeyd*, and its theme was the warfare between authority and truth. Its introduction is also an allegory of

Custom. Her mother is Ignorance, and she is a witch who makes us fancy ourselves in the sunshine when we are in darkness. Custom and the rabble together will draw us to perdition faster than "Truth and reason bring us to the understanding of our error." May "the Spirit of God, which is the schoolmaster to lead us into all truth," then inspire men with "courage to execute his holy wil." This is revolutionary doctrine, fit for times that try men's souls. It has something in common with the flattery of aggressive minorities by propagandists like Dr. Goebbels in modern Europe. There is this difference between the irrational and mystic grain in Puritan revolutionary thought and the corresponding element in modern appeals to the superior wisdom, or blood, or race of revolutionary minorities: in spite of his faith in God's habit of revealing truth "first to his Englishmen," Milton believed in truth as stronger than power, and he believed in the Reformation as greater than England's part in it. What little mystical faith he had was in the time in which he lived. He saw it as one of those moments when God makes a sudden intervention in human affairs "in behalf of truth and righteousness." His thinking assumes the Puritan view which inspires *Paradise Lost*: Human history is a series of lapses from man's original perfection as Adam realized it, and as it was partly realized again in the time of the primitive church, and at other times of extraordinary divine manifestation, such as that in which Milton thought of himself as living. Mr. Woodhouse contrasts his thinking with that of Edmund Burke in the *Reflections on the French Revolution*, on the ground that the Puritans were fundamentally indifferent to the lessons of history. It is doubtful in Milton's case, however, whether Puritan contempt for the past seriously influenced him. What seems like that, when it is not the anti-episcopal pamphleteer's hostility to his opponents' antiquarianism, is really the uncompromising idealism of the Christian conscience. His contemporary, Meric Casaubon, whose *Treatise of Use and Custom* (1638) is the work of a mind quite as conservative as Burke's, reminds us that such idealism is perennial in Christianity. The Car-

thaginian, Tertullian, he thought, spoke for Christians of all epochs when he wrote that "Christ called himself Truth and not Custom." The Stoic Seneca seemed to Casaubon to speak like a Christian when he said that we err because we are the creatures of custom rather than of reason; and he took pleasure in the old Canon Law principle that, while the servants of custom may escape the censure of human laws, they cannot escape the pains of hell. Casaubon was incapable of Milton's violence, but he fully shared Milton's view that a Christian can be recognized by his skepticism of custom.

50. If Milton had carried his skepticism of the habitual thinking of his time a step further than he did, and had made his conviction that women should share the right of divorce by consent equally with men unmistakably clear, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, Restored to the Good of Both Sexes* would be as much praised as *Areopagitica*. For convincing proof that the title meant what it said, and that Milton "is one of those on whom ultimately depend for their ideas all who would give to women opportunities and advantages," the student should go to Professor Allan H. Gilbert's excellent studies of "Milton on the Position of Women."<sup>12</sup> There he will find an antidote for the passages in the divorce tracts that seem to make a virtue of reminding 'uxorious' males of their wives' inferiority. Professor Gilbert rests his case mainly on Milton's own words, but there is other evidence on his side. Any reader who is familiar with the courtesy and domestic books of the period is sure to be struck by Milton's concern for the feelings as well as for the advantages of women and even of children. William Perkins' *Christian Oeconomy* is a good representative of the latter class of books, and it is eminently considerate in its tone toward women, who were a great part of its public. This is the way it puts its two rules for a wife's duty:

"The first is, to submit her selfe to her husband, and to acknowledge and reverence him as her head in all things.

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<sup>12</sup> *M.L.R.* XV (1920), pp. 9-27, 240-64.

The second dutie is, to be obedient unto her husband in all things, that is, wholly to depend upon him, both in iudgement and in will.<sup>13</sup>

For an interesting and convincingly documented study of the high value put upon men's affection for their wives in works like Perkins' *Christian Oeconomy* and Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline*, the reader should turn to Professor Haller's article on "The Puritan Art of Love."<sup>14</sup>

51. If we go back to the greatest of the courtesy books, Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, which is said to have inspired Shakespearian heroines as gay and bold as Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing*, we find it assumed there that "women are unperfect creatures, and consequently of lesse worthinesse than men, and not apt to receive those virtues that they are."<sup>15</sup> Milton accepted that view, but he was none the less capable in *Tetrachordon* of pleading that "the law is to tender the liberty and the human dignity of them that live under the law, whether it be the man's right above the woman or the woman's just appeal against wrong and servitude." A wife, Milton insisted, "is no servant." His readers knew that he meant what he said. The most damning thing that his anonymous answerer could find to put at the head of his formal rebuttal of Milton in *An Answer to a Book, Intituled, The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*<sup>16</sup> was the charge that Milton sought to prove the right of the wife to "sue a divorce from her Husband upon the same grounds."

#### IV. AREOPAGITICA

52. In the *Second Defence of the English People* Milton grouped *Areopagitica* with his divorce tracts as having been written in defense of "domestic or private liberty." Freedom of the press seemed to him more a matter of personal than of

<sup>13</sup> Pp. 130-2.

<sup>14</sup> In *The Huntington Library Quarterly* V, 235-72.

<sup>15</sup> Hoby's translation, Everyman, p. 196.

<sup>16</sup> P. 13.

the civil liberty which had been secured in 1641 by the suppression of the bishops' courts and of the Court of Star Chamber. Because free speech and a free press have come to be regarded as a mainstay of civil liberty, it is no longer easy to regard them in quite the personal light that the seventeenth century did. Religious persecution is, and until recently political persecution was, too far back in the past for us to understand all of their psychological effects. To think of them as Milton did we must try to recreate the period that was ending when Spinoza defined tyranny or violent government as that "where every man is denied the liberty of saying and declaring what he thinks"; while moderate or liberal government, he said, was that "where such liberty is allowed."

53. The *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* stands just inside the range of modern political ideas, while *Areopagitica* is hardly inside their frontier because it is a part of the struggle which created them. Like Milton, Spinoza believed that where free speech is suppressed, "Learning and Arts decay, Faith is corrupted," and power falls to the most unscrupulous. This principle resembles the modern conception of free speech and a free press as rights in which society is more interested than even the most sensitive individual can be; yet Spinoza's chief concern, like Milton's, was to assert the right of the individual conscience against the control of the state, and to show that society had less to fear than to hope from free speech. "In a free Commonwealth," his preface says, "nothing can be more mischievously devised . . . than to possess Mens Judgments, which are free, with Prejudices; or in any manner to restrain or compel them, it being utterly repugnant to Common Liberty." By the date of the *Tractatus*—1670—Holland seemed to be ready for the idea that free speech "concerning things meerly speculative"<sup>1</sup> was not dangerous to public peace. When John Locke's *Letter on Toleration* was published in 1667, English-

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<sup>1</sup> Ideas comparable with Spinoza's had been expressed by Jean Bodin (ca.1529-ca.1597) (in whose *Heptaplomeres* Milton was interested) in his *Republic* IV, vii. Full religious freedom was a feature of Macaria, the Utopia imagined by Samuel Hartlib.

men were not quite ready for indiscriminate toleration of all creeds, and Locke did not extend it to Roman Catholics. In 1644 the pamphleteer who wrote *Areopagitica* was too deeply and personally involved in religious controversy for us to expect him to take a more philosophical view of the problem of freedom of speech than Locke did of the closely allied one of religious toleration.

54. The controversies in which Milton was involved were still those represented by *Reason of Church Government*. It is fantastic to read his account of his defence of "domestic liberty" in *Areopagitica* as if it were a confession that the tract was a mere off-shoot of his troubles in publishing his opinions about divorce. Parliament's severe Ordinance for Printing of 14 June, 1643, did not prevent the prompt publication of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and *The Judgment of Martin Bucer on Divorce*—like *Areopagitica*, without license—in 1644. Although the immediate effect was to increase compliance with the rule that everything published in England should be entered on the Stationers' Register, unlicensed printing continued even among some of the Company's own members. The speed with which Milton's printers were found, though his changes among them may have been significant of difficulties with the licensers, shows that he did not have much to fear from the law.<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary censorship was still far from the nominal length that it was to reach in 1649, when "orders were issued to seize all the private presses in the counties and to arrest the hawkers of books."<sup>3</sup> The severity of the later legislation, however, indicated nothing more clearly than it did the impotence of Parliament to control the press. *Areopagitica* was not inspired merely by Milton's anxiety over a piece of reactionary legislation. As he indicated in *The Second Defense*—it developed out of his anti-episcopal tracts. Its opening attack on the Inquisition stemmed from their

<sup>2</sup> W. R. Parker, "Milton, Rothwell, and Simmons," *Library*, 4th Series, XVIII, 84-103.

<sup>3</sup> G. P. Gooch and H. J. Laski, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1927), p. 165.

assaults upon the English hierarchy, and their defense of the right of the independent sects to risk spiritual anarchy in defense of the Truth anticipates the thinking in the last three divisions of the argument in *Areopagitica*: the plea that character and knowledge develop best where the winds of doctrine blow a gale, the condemnation of all censorship of the arts in the name of morality, and the resentment of the insult of censorship to scholarship, to the self-respect of ordinary people and their leaders, the clergy, and to Truth herself.

55. The first main argument in *Areopagitica* is an attempt to blacken all censorship by associating it with the tyrannies which grew up in the decline of ancient civilization and with the Inquisition. Milton knew that his public, including even the liberal Anglicans for whom Jeremy Taylor was soon to speak in *The Liberty of Prophesying* (1646), was certain to respond to that approach. Taylor, who can hardly have been at all influenced by Milton, was no less severe than he upon the Inquisition and, incidentally, upon the persecution of independent writers in imperial Rome. Milton's attempt to link the censorship in England through the bishops with the Inquisition was not historically unsound. In *Animadversions* he had looked back at the censorship of Puritan propaganda by the Elizabethan bishops and quoted Sir Francis Bacon to prove that "the bishops' uneven hand over those pamphlets" had always consigned "those against the bishops to darkness," but had licensed "those against the Puritans to be uttered openly." Milton knew that even moderate churchmen had avowed that policy, as Bishop Hall did in *The Peacemaker* (1624), on the ground that error, which before the invention of printing, "could but creep, . . . doth now fly, and in a moment cuts the air of several regions." Indeed, in a passage which is worth quoting for the light that it sheds on Milton's argument, Hall suggested that his colleagues might learn "wit" from their "cunning adversaries," whose Inquisition had "decreed . . . :

That the approbation of any book to be published, shall be given by the Bishop of the Diocese; . . . that a book, formerly published, shall not be reprinted, without a new license; . . . that those which



have prohibited books, shall not be discharged by burning them; but must necessarily bring them to their superiors. Yea, so wary they are, in preventing all possibilities of peril, that even the works of their own greatest champion, Cardinal Bellarmin, are not allowed a promiscuous sale and perusal, because they do but relate, though with confutation, the opinions and arguments of the heretics.<sup>4</sup>

56. English censorship went back as far as Elizabeth's Injunctions Concerning Religion (1559), the fifty-first of which subjected most of the books then published to censorship by royal or ecclesiastical authority. By the Decree of the Court of Star Chamber concerning Printing, 11 July, 1637, all the latent dangers to personal liberty in censorship were realized. The licensing authority was again entrusted to the two archbishops, the Bishop of London, and the Chancellors of the two universities, so that in effect Archbishop Laud had legal control of every press in the country, except the two university presses, and one of these he controlled as Chancellor of the University of Oxford. By empowering the licensers to stop the publication of any book containing anything "contrary to Christian Faith, and the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England," or "against the State or Government," or "contrary to good life or good manners," the fourth article gave them wide discretionary powers. Later articles provided fines, imprisonment, and corporal punishment for offenders at the discretion of the court, which had actually sentenced Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton to life imprisonment and the loss of their ears. The shrewdest and the most annoying provision of the decree was its limitation of the right to operate presses in London to twenty master craftsmen whom it specified by name and invested with the right to search private premises without warrant in order to enforce their monopoly.

57. The Star Chamber decree precipitated a flood of unlicensed pamphlets. After the abolition of the court in 1641, the flood broke all bounds. The Ordinance for Printing in 1643, against which Milton was protesting, seems to have been aimed at the Royalist press in Oxford. It hardly mitigated the sufferings of

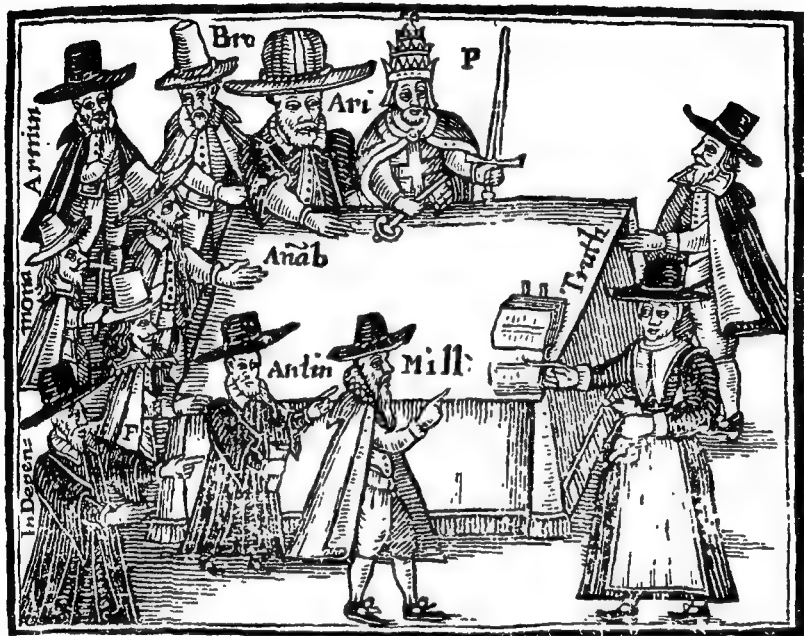
<sup>4</sup>*The Works of Joseph Hall, D.D.* (Oxford, 1837) VII, p. 91.

London under its own deluge of pamphlets, broadsheets, and printed speeches which either had been made in Parliament or, like *Areopagitica*, were addressed to it. The defeated bishops had either to surrender in silence or debate on very unequal ground with their conquerors. Men of Bishop Hall's temper could no longer speak persuasively to a large public. The Anglican position must now be defended in the spirit of Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophecy* (1647), which gently tried to "redargue" not only the Presbyterians, but even the sects of the extreme left, like the Anabaptists. On the other side, the victors showed small tolerance, even of one another. Thomas Edwards produced a classic of bigotry in *Gangraena: or a Catalogue and Discovery of many Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies, and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this Time* (1646). Even a moderate controversialist like Ephraim Pagitt, who had been rather unwillingly converted from Anglicanism, was hardly less sweeping in his denunciation of the sects in *Heresiography* (1644), which reached its fourth edition in less than three years. A less famous, but perhaps more representative tract, John Graunt's *Truths Victory over Heresy* (1645), amusingly cartooned the struggle among the sects as it looked from the Presbyterian point of view. On the title page ten of them were identified by labelled figures, some of whose faces may have been portraits. So the dedication to Sir Benjamin Rudyard implied by warning him that "he that is most obscure in his person, is most dangerously subtill and mysterious in his doctrine: and at this very time, in which you sit in Parliament, . . . he doth more hurt in one hour then in ten heretofore. His badge is F."<sup>5</sup> It is significant that Truth (or Holy Church, who on page 61 is called "the mother of Truth") and the champion beside her confront the sects in a *debate*, where both sides seem to enjoy complete freedom of speech. The ten schismatics are self-righteously undaunted, and Graunt

<sup>5</sup> The sects identified, from the top, counter-clockwise (are Roman Catholics, Arians (*i.e.* Anti-Trinitarians), Brownists, Arminians, Anabaptists, Fifth Monarchists, Familists, Independents (of whom were over twenty varieties, and whose name was often understood as including several of the other sects represented here), Antinomians, and Millenarians.

# TRUTHS VICTORY AGAINST HERESIE;

All sorts comprehended under these ten mentioned :



1. Papists, 2. Familists, 3. Arrians, 4. Arminians, 5. Anabaptists, 6. Separatists, 7. Antinomists, 8. Monarchists.
9. Millenarists, 10. Independents.

As also a Description of the Truth, the Church of Christ, her present suffering estate for a short time yet to come; and the glory that followeth at the generall Resurrection.

By I. G. A faithfull lover and obeyer of the Truth.

Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them, Rom. 16. 17.

*Imprimatur,* JOHN DOWNAME.

London, Printed for H. R. at the three Pigeons in Pauls Church-yard, 1645.

himself ended by acknowledging that they would have to be heard.

58. Yet it was hard to hear them patiently. Even before the Ordinance for Printing there were pamphlets against pamphleteering, and in April, 1643, the Stationer's Company sent a Remonstrance to Parliament asking for the appointment of licensers. The motives were financial, but the presumptive author of the *Remonstrance*, Henry Parker, voiced the fear of unrestricted printing which had disturbed many Englishmen, and even some Puritans, since Spenser, in the first canto of *The Faerie Queene*, had represented the dragon, Error, as belching "bookes and papers" over the landscape. Experience, however, had shown that printing could not be effectively censored. By 1644 liberals, both tough and tender-minded, were coming to agree with William Walwyn's *Compassionate Samaritane*,<sup>6</sup> that the Long Parliament would "prove themselves lovingfathers to all sorts of good men" by making the press "free for any man that writes nothing scandalous or dangerous to the state." Optimistic liberals were soon to join Richard Overton's *Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens* (1646)<sup>7</sup> in crying, "Let the imprisoned presses at liberty, that all men's understandings may be more conveniently informed."

59. The imprisoned presses could hardly be set free unless Parliament was ready to accept the principle of religious liberty. Rather against its will, it had already entangled itself with that principle by its treatment of the bishops. Indeed, one of its leading members, Robert Greville, Lord Brooke, in the tract which is mentioned in *Areopagitica*, *A Discourse opening the Nature of that Episcopacie, which is exercised in England* (1641),<sup>8</sup> showed what the logic of events ought to be. In doing so he wrote a far more intolerant plea for toleration than Milton did. The *Discourse* is an indictment of the Elizabethan hierarchy for having despised "the Judgement, Learning, and

<sup>6</sup> P. 79. This tract and those by Richard Overton and Lord Brooke which are mentioned immediately below, are all in William Haller's *Tracts on Liberty*.

<sup>7</sup> P. 19.

<sup>8</sup> P. 86.

Piety of those holy, worthy, pretious Saints, *Calvin, Beza, Bucer, P(eter) Martyr, Oecolampadius, Zwinglius*, with many more, great, famous, and eminent Lights, in their times.”<sup>9</sup> Lord Brooke admired the Dutch policy of general religious toleration, but he admired it most as an improvement over the previous, enforced “Unity of Darknesse and Ignorance” in Holland. While he thought it “cleer both from experience and Scripture, and reason that Heresies must come,” he was intolerant enough of the most extreme of the contemporary sects, the Antinomians, Grindletonians, and the Family of Love, to surmise that they were particularly intended by St. Paul’s prophecy in II Timothy iii, 1-5, about the sinners to appear in the “last days,” when “men shall be . . . proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce . . .” Yet such was his faith in the millennial dawn which was breaking upon England with Parliament’s threatened ending of the bishops’ power, that he accepted the worst that the sects could do. Light, he said in concluding the *Discourse*, cannot be restrained, “and the more it is opposed, it shines the brighter; so that now to stint it, is to resist an *enlightened, enflamed Multitude*.” He rejoiced that the bishops—those “Parents and Patrons of most Errors, Heresies, Sects and Schisms that now disturb this Church and State”—could expect no more mercy. If we are looking for religious toleration as the principle has been understood for the past century, we cannot stop with Lord Brooke.

60. The staunchest defenders of that principle in London in 1644 seem to have been the merchant, Henry Robinson, and the Vicar of St. Stephen’s in Coleman Street, John Goodwin. When *Areopagitica* was being readied for the press, Robinson, in a tract called *John the Baptist*, was declaring the absolute “necessity of suffering erroneous opinions to be published, lest the truth . . . should be stifled.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Robinson’s pamphlets generally reveal a mind fully as idealistic as Milton’s in its determination to shatter theological restraints upon the

<sup>9</sup> P. 93.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted by W. K. Jordan in *Men of Substance* (Chicago, 1942), p. 127.

freedom of thought and expression. At the same time, from the point of view of an independent clergyman, Goodwin was preaching the principle that he was later to proclaim in *The Independency of God's Verity*—the principle that "Every Englishman" should esteem "it as properly his own as any immunity contained in Magna Charta, to use his conscience without control."<sup>11</sup>

61. There is no certainty that in 1644 Milton was familiar with either Goodwin or Robinson, but it is certain that he was the friend of the now most famous champion of religious liberty in England, Roger Williams. Williams was in London to get a charter for the colony in Rhode Island (Providence Plantations) and to have it drawn on the principles that he found time at odd moments during his English visit to embody in *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution*. The charter which he was actually soon to get from Cromwell, Pym, the younger Sir Henry Vane, and the other members of a parliamentary commission, actually gave the colonists unlimited powers to put those principles into effect if, by their own democratic vote, they so decided. Among some leading men of action in 1644 the theory of religious toleration had almost established itself. In practice Parliament was hardly ready for it. The paramount need of the moment was to secure all possible support from Scotland in the negotiations with Charles, and the Scots insisted on a Presbyterian establishment. So the legislation of 1644 rather inconclusively confirmed the Presbyterian organization of the Church in England into classical (*i.e.* local), provincial, and national assemblies. While the local elders were denied the full disciplinary powers that Scottish elders enjoyed, they could appeal to Parliament's commissioners in every province to excommunicate those who were irregular in conduct or belief. Though the less conspicuous sects were not molested by the authorities, the laws against Roman Catholics remained in full force and were confirmed in 1649, together with those against the prelatists, by the Instrument of Govern-

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<sup>11</sup> Reproduced in part by A. S. P. Woodhouse in *Puritanism and Liberty*, p. 186.

ment which made Cromwell Lord Protector. In 1644 Parliament was hardly ready for Williams' declaration in *The Bloudy Tenent*, that "Idolaters, False-worshippers, Antichristians without discouragement to true Christians, must be let alone and permitted in the world to grow and fill up the measure of their sinnes, after the image of him that hath sowed them, untill the great Harvest shall make the difference."<sup>12</sup>

62. Williams' own religious development from Congregationalism through Baptist convictions to an almost completely individualist position, coupled with his experience of persecution by the Puritans in Massachusetts and his acquaintance with religious toleration in Holland, all combined to make him a prophet of religious freedom. His tolerance was greater than Milton's, for it included "idolaters . . . either Turkes or Pagans, Jewes or Antichristians," who, he had observed, "even to the death hold fast (or rather are held fast by) their delusions."<sup>13</sup> In the light of his own moral and physical suffering, he could say that not "all Heresie is against light of Conscience." Yet it is hardly fair to Milton to regard Williams as having been *intellectually* the more tolerant man. Williams was as naïvely convinced as any of his bigoted contemporaries that much heresy was sheer hypocrisy, and that it was destined to eternal punishment "in the presence of the holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lambe. The smoake of their torment," he wrote, citing Revelation xiv, 10-11, "shall ascend up for ever and ever." Milton was too much attracted by such heresies as "Antitrinitarianism" and by some elements in the living tradition of Jewish thought to suppose that their core could be an intellectual dishonesty worthy to burn in the final holocaust.

63. Modern admirers of Roger Williams are discreetly silent about this apocalyptic element in *The Bloudy Tenent*. It deserves to be remembered, for it throws light upon Milton's somewhat transcendental conception of truth in *Areopagitica*. In form the *Tenent* is a dialogue between Truth and Peace. On its first page Truth reminds Peace of the "promise of the

<sup>12</sup> Chapter xxiv, p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> P. 152.

God of Heaven that Righteousness and Peace shall kisse each other" after the present world has been destroyed and succeeded by "New Heavens and New Earth, wherein dwells Righteousnesse, 2 Pet. 3." Until then, says Truth, "both thou and I must hope, and wait, and beare the furie of the Dragons wrath." The Dragon, of course, is Satan, and one measure of the difference between Milton and Williams is the difference between this apocalyptic picture of Truth triumphing over the devil in a world to come and Milton's figure of truth as tragically represented in this world by Osiris in Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*. That story of the god's dismemberment by the evil deity, Typhon, and of the despair of his wife, Isis, keeps its mystery and imaginative appeal as myth even while Milton turns it to prophecy of Truth's "Master's second coming."

64. *The Bloody Tenent* is not concerned with the liberty of the press, for that is both a wider and a narrower question than religious toleration. A glance at the most dramatic of the contemporary tracts on toleration, Richard Overton's *The Araignment of Mr. Persecution* (1645), will show how clearly a shrewder mind than Williams' could relate the two questions and interrelate them, as Milton also did, with the parliamentary principle. The *Araignment* is an allegorical mock trial which its author "presented to the consideration of the House of Commons." In its opening scene the forces which protect society, one of which is Mr. Power of Parliaments, sit as a grand jury and bring in a true bill against Mr. Persecution. There is little hope of a conviction, however, for a holy censorship—a "Reverend Imprimatur"—has gagged the press. "All was as fast as the Divil and the Presbyters could make it." Mr. Power of Parliament's plea for the indictment is a classic statement of faith in parliamentary institutions, including freedom of the press. Incidentally, it associated censorship with the Inquisition in an appeal to popular prejudice like that on which Milton relied in his first argument in *Areopagitica*. "My verdict, (Mr. Foreman)," says the juror, "is that . . . the tendency, operation, and end of Persecution, is to reduce the Power of Kingdomes and Parliaments from themselves into



the hands and disposall of the Pontificall Clergie, according to the devilish decree of Pope Paul 4, Council of Trent, lib. 5, p. 409. So that there can be no security for the power of the Magistracy where Ecclesiasticke usurpation is predominant: . . . wherefore I must needs consent to the equity of the Byll."<sup>14</sup>

65. Overton's faith in Parliament as the natural enemy of Persecution could hardly have been born before the country had had some experience of parliamentary intervention in ecclesiastical affairs. By accepting the Covenant and calling the Westminster Assembly, the House of Commons had virtually become the head of the more or less legally established Presbyterian church; but Charles had not surrendered his supremacy, and as recently as the winter of 1642, in the conclusion of *Church Government*, Milton had urged him to use his ecclesiastical power boldly against the bishops. If he yielded that power entirely to Parliament, the change for the church would not be one of masters only. It would end a personal authority which had been wielded in harmony with venerable tradition, and would leave that tradition at the mercy of a debating society. Given full power over the church, Parliament might either clamp a rigid Presbyterianism on the country or hand it over to anarchic Independency. For the moment the last appeal was to the Presbyterian majority in Parliament, but already the pamphleteers were threatening to carry their appeal a step higher, to Truth itself. John Goodwin's tracts were candidly addressed in Truth's name to public opinion. Puritanism insisted that in religion men should think for themselves, and not unnaturally men of the bolder sort began to question the right of Parliament to do the nation's ecclesiastical thinking. In the political field most Puritans still accepted John Pym's description of the Short Parliament to itself as related to the country as a whole exactly "as the rational faculties of the soul are to man." Pym pictured Parliament as incarnating the mind of the state. In 1644 Milton accepted that view only because he hoped that Independent leaders like Cromwell and Vane would keep the ecclesiastical policy of the

<sup>14</sup> P. 4. The *Araignment* is reprinted in Haller's *Tracts on Liberty*, III.

House of Commons liberal. The new presbyters, who were fast coming to seem more powerful and tyrannous than the paralyzed bishops, made Milton afraid of their influence in Parliament. At the same time he knew that a Royalist victory—if such a thing were conceivable after Cromwell's success at Marston Moor—would mean the return of the bishops to power.

66. It has been suggested that the opening remarks about Parliament in *Areopagitica* may have been intended as a reply to some fulsome flattery of the members by Bishop Hall in *A Modest Confutation*: "The sun looks not on a braver, nobler Convocation than is that of King, Peers and Commons, whose equal justice and wise moderation shall eternally triumph, in that they have hitherto deferred to do what the sour exorbitancies on the one hand, and eager solicitations on the other, not permitting them to consult with reason, would have prompted them to." In *An Apology against a Pamphlet called A Modest Confutation*, etc., Milton had already quoted these words in order to answer them in a digression comparing the "repulses . . . given to the Prelates" by Parliament with the exploits of liberators "of highest fame in poems and panegyrics of old." This characteristic Miltonic reasoning prepares for the warning to Parliament in *Areopagitica* not to fall below the standards of freedom of republican Athens and Rome. The ancient worthies, says the *Apology*, "set at liberty cities and nations of men good and bad mixed together": whereas Parliament has opened the prisons and dungeons and "called out of darkness and bonds the elect martyrs and witnesses of their Redeemer." (Doubtless Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne would occur to the reader.) Parliament, he concludes, "by this only repulse of an unholy hierarchy, almost in a moment replenished with saving knowledge their country nigh famished for want of that which should feed their souls."

67. When Milton compared England's liberators with those of the ancient world, he was not merely flattering Parliament. He was simply stating the faith of most of the educated men in his party. Two years later, when he had to put the cause of a free press to Parliament, he again compared English free-

dom with that of Athens and Rome. By implication his title, *Areopagitica*, compared the Lords and Commons to the judges of the supreme court in ancient Athens which took its name from the hill Areopagus, where it met.<sup>15</sup> One of the rules of that court—as the first chapter of Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric* recalls—forbade flattery and every kind of impertinent appeal to the judges. It was a familiar rule, for current literature was full of allusions to it. The anonymous preface to the little essay on *The Nature of Truth*, which Lord Brooke had published in 1640, apologizes for any seeming violation of the rule of "that severe Court." Milton's allies, the Smectymnuans, justified the abrupt beginning of their first attack upon Bishop Hall by appealing to that same "constitution of those admired sonnes of Iustice, the *Areopagi*"; and Hall, in his reply to them, incurred Milton's wrath by wasting space on correction of their form, *Areopagi*, to *Areopagites*. Milton's *Animadversions* retorted that, when Hall was "urged . . . with a decree of the sage and severe judges of Athens," his only reply had been to cite the Smectymnuans "before a capricious pedantry of hot-livered grammarians."

68. If Milton's reverence for "the sage and severe judges of Athens" seems forced, the reader should check it against their living prestige as he can find it reflected in the monograph which the French Protestant scholar, Jean de Meurs, published at Leyden in 1624, *Areopagus, or on the Areopagitic Senate*.<sup>16</sup> Treating "its dignity and authority" in his fourth chapter, De Meurs accumulated a mass of literary evidence proving the honor in which the court was held by the Greeks for a thousand years. To prove its existence long before Solon's laws made it the guardian of the Athenian constitution, he appealed to the tradition of the heroic age. Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, he recalled, not only represents the Areopagites as passing judgment on Orestes in the presence of the avenging Furies from

<sup>15</sup> Literally the name means "Mars' hill." Cf. Paul's sermon "in the midst of Mars' hill" (Acts xvii, 22, 34) and his conversion of Dionysius the Areopagite.

<sup>16</sup> Consulted in Gronovius' *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Graecarum et Romanarum*, Leyden, 1699.

the infernal world; it also brings in Athene herself to praise them as "a tribunal inaccessible to bribes, venerable and severe, and the guardian of the earth." During the development of the Athenian empire, however, De Meurs shows, the court gradually lost its power and influence. It seems to have been too conservative for full cooperation with even as intelligent a democrat as Pericles. Immediately after the empire began to disintegrate, the prestige of the Areopagus—though perhaps not its power—again rose. Men looked back with something like religious reverence to the times of the court's half-legendary greatness. In 355 B.C.—just after Rhodes and Byzantium had won their independence from Athens—Isocrates wrote the eulogy to which Milton referred as "a discourse to the Parliament of Athens," but which he described as having been addressed to all the educated citizens. Isocrates' oration is usually called his *Areopagitic Speech*, but De Meurs sometimes spoke of it by the title which Milton chose for his appeal to the Parliament of England, *Areopagitica*.

69. A reader who turns from Milton's to Isocrates' speech will be struck by the latter's conservatism. Milton calls it an attempt to persuade the Athenians "to change the form of democracy which was then established," but the changes proposed by Isocrates—who wrote at the age of eighty—are a return to the virtues of Solon's times, when public officers were carefully chosen, and there were no wars, high taxes, law suits, or poverty. In that golden age, which seemed more democratic to him than it does to modern historians—he recalled that public morals had been secured by the Areopagites. In a passage which contrasts strangely with Milton's bold protest against censorship of the arts, Isocrates looks admiringly back upon the vigilant scrutiny of the pleasures of the rich and of the intemperance of youth by the Areopagus in the sixth century B.C. De Meurs quoted this passage and pointed out that it had been quoted often enough to be familiar to a good many readers. Perhaps no passage in any of Isocrates' speeches was better known. Its drift is not narrowly puritanical, for it simply recommends a democratically fair enforcement of law

and an ideal in education rather like Plato's. Milton may have been conscious that this passage was very far from supporting his own liberal position about the censorship of the arts, and he took pains to point out that the censorship of books by the Areopagus in historic times was strictly limited to "atheistical" and "libellous" writing. Like De Meurs in another of his monographs—that on *Athenian Justice*—Milton took great satisfaction in the liberty of Athenian old comedy to lampoon public men as Aristophanes did, subject to no restraint except the ban on openly naming them.

70. The main appeal of the Areopagus to Milton's imagination was its fancied resemblance to Parliament. He thought of it as a representative body, for De Meurs vaguely suggests its development from a court of nine men, whom the tyrant Peisistratus appointed, to an independent body of perhaps two hundred and eighty. From Solon's time down, the judges were elected by the citizens, and—unlike all other public officers in Athens—so strong was the traditional faith in their integrity, the Areopagites were chosen for life. The greatest glory of his city's history seemed to Isocrates to be its democratically elected supreme court. In his *Panathenaic Oration* he pleaded that his country's greatest distinction was Lycurgus' adoption of the Athenian elective principle to temper the tyrannous oligarchic constitution of Sparta. De Meurs quoted this passage,<sup>17</sup> and observed that it had been cited by a number of modern writers. In the imagination of Englishmen it had become acclimated as a part of the half-Utopian, half-revolutionary ideal of elective "aristocracies or democratical monarchies" such as Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* described: admitting "none to bear office, but such as are learned, like those Athenian Areopagites, wise, discreet, and well brought up."<sup>18</sup>

71. To Englishmen with parliamentary leanings "the lords of Areopagus" seemed like a perfect historical justification for the lords in Parliament. Parliament, as the impeachment of

<sup>17</sup> P. 2080.

<sup>18</sup> Part II, Section iii, Member 2.

Strafford and Laud had recently reminded the country, had judicial as well as legislative powers. Its friends thought of it as a sanhedrin dedicated to the restoration of the purity of the primitive church to the religious life of the country, or as a council fulfilling Plato's dream of a realm where philosophers would be kings. Milton was far from being alone in that faith. Even among King Charles's supporters some were convinced of the parliamentary principle. One of them, Lord Falkland, who Clarendon said belonged in Plato's *Republic*, died a virtual suicide at the battle of Newbury because his royalist sympathies would not square with his "reverence to parliaments." "He thought it really impossible," said Clarendon,<sup>19</sup> "that they could ever produce any inconvenience to the kingdom, or that the kingdom could be tolerably happy in the intermission of them."

72. The rhetoric of *Areopagitica* was largely an appeal to the nation-wide faith in parliaments. Even its bold criticism of the Ordinance for Printing encouraged that faith, for it implied Milton's confidence in a fair hearing. In the main his audience was too inexperienced to anticipate our modern doubt of the ability of representative bodies to solve the "old, long-vexed questions" which Carlyle in *Past and Present* protested were "not yet solved in logical words and parliamentary laws." Milton himself felt something like Carlyle's doubt, but in 1644 he had great faith in the leaders of the ascendant minority in Parliament. That year produced some stiffer appeals than his to the House of Commons, but the bolder such tracts were the stronger was their implied faith in their audience. A humbler petitioner than Milton, William Walwyn, wrote, in addressing his *Compassionate Samaritane*<sup>20</sup> to the House of Commons, that it was possible to tell them plainly, "without boldnesse and without feare," that their Ordinance for Printing was indefensible. "An Ordinance for suppression of all Anabaptisticall, Brownisticall, or Independent writings," he said, would have been less obnoxious. Walwyn was writing in

<sup>19</sup> *History of the Rebellion* (Macray's edition) III, p. 181.

<sup>20</sup> P. 63. This tract is reprinted in Haller's *Tracts on Liberty* III.

defense of liberty of conscience rather than of freedom of the press, and his stand was that of John Goodwin and others who thought of the pulpit, the press, and the Parliament House alike as platforms for a debate that should be as free and endless as thought itself. The driving force in the widespread opposition to the Ordinance for Printing, as Milton clearly understood, was the craving for liberty of conscience; and the only definable goal for the movement was Truth. The justification of that craving and the definition of that goal are the two most interesting features of *Areopagitica*.

73. The obvious evil in the craving for liberty of conscience was the sectarianism in defending which in *Church Government* Milton had already anticipated the stand that he was to take in *Areopagitica*. The good in the craving was the responsibility that it implies for every man to think for himself. That principle—as Emerson's essay "On Self-Reliance" indicates—is one of the strong links between Milton and American thought. We may have lost his Puritan conscience, but our hearts still vibrate to the iron string of his assertion in *Animadversions* that "reason is the gift of God in one man as well as in a thousand." There he was protesting against the deference of his episcopal opponents to the Councils of the early Church. In *Church Government* his protest became a declaration almost as sweeping as that in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, of individual independence of custom, tradition, and all institutionalized authority. On this side Milton is linked to the modern movement of free thought, but he is no less definitely linked to the Christian conception of the freedom of the will. By a strange paradox,<sup>21</sup> which Professor Hanford has studied in his great article on the temptation theme in *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Areopagitica*, that Christian conception pivoted on the biblical story of the fall of Adam; and Milton's use of that story as a symbol of the will's freedom and its abuse

<sup>21</sup> J. S. Diekhoff, "Eve, the Devil, and *Areopagitica*," *M.L.Q.* V, 429-434, clears the paradox in Eve's use of the "fugitive and cloistered virtue" argument in *Paradise Lost* V, 322-341 on the ground that before the fall Adam and Eve possessed all useful knowledge, and that in the fall they lost the capacity to know good without experience of evil.

in *Areopagitica* is a significant bond between the tract and *Paradise Lost*.

74. Adam's transgression—as it was interpreted even by John Calvin, who emphatically denied the freedom of the will of fallen man—was the act of an absolutely free will, and its effect was the loss of all freedom. In the first of the divorce tracts Milton moved away from the Calvinist view which he was later to condemn in *Christian Doctrine*. When he wrote *Areopagitica* the change in his thought seems to have been finally made; or perhaps when he was writing under a strong classical influence, he first realized how far he had moved from the orthodox, Calvinist position. There, recalling a great dictum of Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (III, ii, 6), he says that freedom of the will or the power to make choices, is the essence of reason itself, "for reason is but choosing." The more reasonable the rational animal, man, is, then, the readier he will be to walk by right reason. Right reason, of course, is a Stoic conception, ultimately derived from Plato's ethics; but in the tract which Milton cites in *Areopagitica* Lord Brooke had called it "the Candle of God, which he hath lighted in man, and kindled afresh by the Christian Liberty of the Gospel."<sup>22</sup> Milton felt that he had excellent pagan and Christian authority both as supports for his new-found faith in the vital, although imperfect freedom of the will of even fallen humanity. To those who complain of Divine Providence in suffering Adam to transgress Milton's reply now is, "Foolish tongues!" for freedom and reason are the same thing.

75. How original and personal Milton's conception of the rational freedom of the will was, it is hard to say. His classic statements of it in *Areopagitica* and *Paradise Lost* are almost its only expressions that are generally familiar today, but we have seen how inevitably it had developed out of the war of ideas between the Puritans and the prelatists. Before the end of the century, it was a principle accepted by most cultivated Englishmen. In Lord Halifax's picture of his ideal gentleman it appears as a kind of axiom. His Trimmer "thinketh it hard

<sup>22</sup> *Episcopacy*, p. 29.



for a soul that doth not love liberty, ever to raise itself to another world," and takes that love to be both "the foundation of all virtue" and "the only seasoning that giveth a relish to life."<sup>23</sup> It is interesting to think of the Puritan, Milton, as influencing the shrewd statesman at the court of Charles II. The less direct the channel of the influence was, the more significant becomes Halifax's conviction about the love of liberty as an ingredient of character

76. Milton's defense of unlicensed printing was made in the names of both liberty and truth, and consistency obliged him to be as undogmatic about the latter as he was positive about the right of the individual conscience to freedom. He could present Truth only as a bright goal at the end of a debate which would last as long as time goes on, but which was somehow to be attained in time for almost immediate enjoyment. That was essentially the position of such pamphleteers as Richard Overton and John Goodwin. It corresponded to the rising tide of democracy and recognized the principle of mass psychology which Milton quoted from Bacon's *Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England*: "a forbidden writing is thought to be a certain spark of truth, that flies up in the faces of them that seek to tread it out." In the realm of personal and group religious experience, it corresponded to that "theory of subjective relativism" which Professor Jordan says<sup>24</sup> had for some time before 1644 been opposed by the Baptists to "the doctrine of exclusive truth, . . . that cornerstone of Protestant intolerance." Subjective relativism was characteristic of much Independent thought, for thousands of earnest souls remembered that in their graduations from one sect to another they had been convinced of very different truths. As William Dell, "Minister of the Gospell of Jesus Christ at Yeldon in the County of Bedford," put it in a sermon called *Power from on High* (1645, p. 10), "the Holy Ghost takes a believer and leades him into one truth after another."

<sup>23</sup> In *A Short History of English Literature*, p. 511, Saintsbury suggested some other influences of *Areopagitica* on *The Character of a Trimmer*.

<sup>24</sup> *Religious Toleration in England, 1603-1640*, p. 261.

Such a process, it might be supposed, would result in a skeptical as well as in a tolerant attitude; but with many of Milton's contemporaries it led to an intensified faith which, while it might make them as tolerant as Roger Williams, had not the slightest trace of skepticism in it. The upshot of it all for William Dell was that the Spirit leads a man "into all *Truth*. He that hath been led into the truth by the Spirit of Truth, is unmoveable and invincible among all doctrines. And thus also the Holy Ghost by being a Spirit of truth is also a Spirit of *Power* in us." Men like Dell could remember that Christianity itself had once been a heresy, and they could rejoice, like Bertrand Russell, that "freedom for new truth involves equal freedom for error." Yet strangely enough, Milton's contemporaries could think of truth also in transcendentially theological terms.

77. In *Areopagitica* truth is what emerges from the test of conflict, but heaven itself is interested in its triumph and is revealed thereby. When Milton wrote that "Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine master," he was speaking the language which many Puritan leaders were soon to be using in the debates of the army's representatives at Whitehall. They favored religious liberty because they believed in the speedy "breaking forth of him who is the Truth, the breaking forth of Christ, in the minds and spirits of men." When Milton wrote that truth was "strong, next to the Almighty," and cried, "Let her and falsehood grapple," he was deliberately appealing to a popular faith. In the rhetoric of some of his contemporaries the doctrine of Truth's invincibility was perhaps too confidently invoked. Like Walwyn in *The Power of Love*<sup>25</sup> (1643), most pamphleteers were convinced that the strength of truth was "sufficient for vanquishing the most artificiall, sophisticall errorr that ever was in the world." Milton deserves no credit for the invention of the Puritan doctrine of the unconquerable might of truth, and the time for honoring him as its first prophet is past. The question that his modern admirers should face is whether his faith in it was as critical

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<sup>25</sup> Found in Haller's *Puritanism and Liberty* II, p. 278.

and enlightened as it was impassioned; or whether—in Professor Whitehead's words<sup>26</sup>—"for all his imagination, learning and literary magnificence, the example of Milton's life does" not do "as much to retard his cause as to advance it."

78. Today the staunchest admirer of Milton must be troubled by Professor Whitehead's doubt, but there may be comfort for him in a comparison of *Areopagitica* with another utterance of the seventeenth century about truth, that of Pascal at the end of the twelfth of the *Lettres provinciales*. It is well known, and nearly a century ago it was compared with Milton's tract by De Guerle,<sup>27</sup> who had the impression that from the time when Mirabeau translated *Areopagitica*, Milton's influence had done something to advance the cause of liberty in France. Pascal's passage comes at the end of an indictment of the Jesuits which yields nothing in severity to Milton's handling of the Presbyterians. He pits the truth of innocence against the political advantage of his opponents. His main position is like Milton's—there can be no common ground between truth and violence, and in the end truth must triumph over violence. "By the command of God, who directs all violent acts to the glory of the truth that they attack," said Pascal, "violence itself is limited, while truth exists eternally, and at last triumphs over its enemies because it is eternal and puissant like God himself." Out of their context, Pascal's words may seem like mere rhetoric, or even the kind of "platitude, so sound as to be meaningless," which Ernest Boyd finds everywhere in *Areopagitica*. The less a reader knows about Milton's historical background and about Pascal's, the likelier he is to find nothing but rhetoric in such utterances as these. The converse of this statement is not strictly true, but it is true that the more a reader knows about the historical background, the likelier he is to accept Pascal's fanaticism and Milton's as a part of the tragedy of history, and the less likely he is to think their rhetoric insincere.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted from Whitehead's *Adventures of Ideas* by T. Lyon in *Religious Liberty in England*, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Milton, sa vie et ses oeuvres*, pp. 230-1.

79. The immediate influence of *Areopagitica*, as Lowell first observed, was small. It failed to convince Parliament. Though after Milton's death it played an amusing part in some agitation for repeal of the licensing law, the action then taken was due to accident rather than to the prestige of the tract. The old story in Toland's *Life of Milton* that "Such was the effect of our author's *Areopagitica* that the following year Mabot, a licenser, offer'd reasons against licensing; and, at his own request, was discharg'd that office," has given way under modern criticism to the opinion that Mabot retired under official pressure. Milton himself, it is said, did not take his ideas seriously, for when he became Latin Secretary to Cromwell's Council of State, he served for some time at least nominally as a licenser of news-sheets.<sup>28</sup> Professor Parker has neatly disposed of that criticism, and he has made a strong though moderate case for Milton's influence on his contemporaries.<sup>29</sup> Yet it is certain that *Areopagitica* was less admired in the seventeenth than it has been in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. That fact is not damning either to Milton or his Victorian and modern admirers. Independently of it, we in the twentieth century have to make up our minds whether *Areopagitica* deserves our admiration, or whether its historic statement of the principle that

There is a weapon,  
Reason and truth are that weapon,

should be allowed to become as remote from our lives as Mr. McLeish makes those words seem from the lives of the public to which they are pronounced in *The Fall of the City*.

80. The answer to that question will be given in terms of Milton's relation to the main intellectual currents of his own

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<sup>28</sup> For a denial of Milton's supposed influence upon Marchamont Needham's editorial work, consult E. A. Beller, "Milton and Mercurius Politicus," *H.L.Q.* V (1943), 479-487.

<sup>29</sup> W. R. Parker, *Milton's Contemporary Reputation* (Columbus, 1940), pp. 56-57. Cf. William Haller's Introduction to his *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution* (New York, 1934) and his "For the Liberty of Unlicenc'd Printing," *The American Scholar* XIV (1945), 326-333.

time and of ours. He was not indiscriminately responsive to all the winds of doctrine which were represented by the tracts that have figured in the present discussion. Though he admired Lord Brooke, he did not follow his lordship's apocalyptic essay *On the Nature of Truth* into its pseudo-Platonic fancies of an ideal society based on the shaky metaphysics of Comenius. Milton may have been interested in the perfect world which Comenius' disciple and his own correspondent, Samuel Hartlib, described in 1641 under the name of Macaria. Full religious toleration was one of its principles, but Macaria was such a realm as Milton condemned in *Areopagitica* for "sequestering out of the world into utopian polities." Milton thought of truth as being pursued in the actual world that he knew, and that is why he showed no interest in the ideal commonwealths of his time, or in such imaginative conceptions of truth as that which Thomas Vaughan, the brother of the poet, took over from the *Theologia Germanica* in *Anima Magica Abscondita, or a Discourse on the Universal Spirit of Nature*. It is instructive to compare the formal diatribe on truth in that Hermetic<sup>30</sup> work with Milton's at the close of *Areopagitica*, and to find that, aside from some vague resemblances of metaphor, they have nothing in common. Vaughan had no tincture of the critical spirit. Milton in spite of his controversial excitement, was always interested in the kind of truth which was enshrined in the motto of his contemporary, the jurist and scholar, John Selden: *Above everything, the truth*. In his *History of Britain* Milton was to prove himself a really critical historian. His handling of sources proves that he could work in terms of the "value of errors known, read, collated," as he praised Selden for doing in the "volume of natural and national laws" (*De Iure naturali et gentium*). In his controversial writing he may have conformed the truth more faithfully to his own convictions than to the meaning of the many authorities whom he quoted, but in being true to himself he was not deliberately false to any man.

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Il Penseroso*, 88, and note.

81. In *Areopagitica* Milton still speaks to the heart of the twentieth century. Most of the popular articles evoked by the tercentenary of the tract echoed Mr. Keeton's tribute to Milton as "one of those great and rare spirits who not only seek freedom for themselves but are equally convinced of its necessity for others."<sup>31</sup> Sir Herbert Grierson was alone in asserting that, because Milton denied free speech to Roman Catholics, he came "to the same conclusion as Plato in the *Laws*, the Inquisition in Spain, the Emperor in Bohemia, and Louis XIV in expelling the Huguenots."<sup>32</sup> Between these conflicting views the year 1944 saw much sound and useful discussion of *Areopagitica* which began with Dr. Johnson's acknowledgement that such unbounded liberty of the press as Milton is uncritically supposed to have championed had dangers only less obvious than those of a rigid censorship. Scholarly criticism continued the course marked by Professor Rice<sup>33</sup> in 1941 in recognizing the limits of Milton's tolerance of intolerance. The memorable symposium<sup>34</sup> held by the London P.E.N. at the Institut Français in South Kensington in August 1944 explored the whole relevance of *Areopagitica* to the modern world. Milton's authority was twice challenged by defenders of Soviet practice and Marxist theory in the field of press censorship, and the case for a strong Communal Collective was forcefully put on economic grounds by Professor Haldane. The mutual rights and obligations of society and the individual were twice impartially analyzed, and Dr. C. E. M. Joad stated the ethical and practical case for untrammelled individual self-expression. Mr. Read<sup>35</sup> assailed both fascist and communist censorship of the press with Milton's timeless arguments, and he also revived Milton's plea against the monopoly of the Stationers' Company,

<sup>31</sup> G. W. Keeton, "Tercentenary of *Areopagitica*," *Contemporary Review* CLXVI (1944), 280-286.

<sup>32</sup> Sir H. J. C. Grierson, "Milton and Liberty," *M.L.R.* XXXIX (1944), 97-107.

<sup>33</sup> Warner Rice, "A Note on *Areopagitica*," *J.E.G.P.* XL (1941), 474-481.

<sup>34</sup> The addresses of the president, Mr. E. M. Forster, and of several conferees are summarized by Phyllis Bentley in "Man and Collective Man," *Fortnightly*, October 1944.

<sup>35</sup> Herbert Read, "On Milton's *Areopagitica*," *Adelphi* XXI (1944), 9-15.

pointing out that a proposed assignment of a virtual licensing authority to the British Publishers' Association would amount to a private commercial censorship over the press. Mr. Herbert Agar and Dr. Mulk Raj Anand carried the discussion into the international area, where the Great Powers of today and the World State of tomorrow may threaten the right of small nations to be heard on all levels from diplomacy to journalism. To a greater extent than perhaps any of the participants in the P.E.N. symposium suspected, it proved that Milton is with us at this hour and is likely to be with us still when we come to the final reckoning between the individual and society.

#### V. THE TENURE OF KINGS AND MAGISTRATES AND THE READY AND EASY WAY TO ESTABLISH A FREE COMMONWEALTH

82. Milton's political thought is represented in this book by the tract on *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, by a short fragment translated from his *Second Defence of the English People*, and by his final defense of republican institutions in the second edition of *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* late in April, 1660. Both the *Tenure* and the *Way* were as frankly pieces of special pleading as were the great defenses of the English people themselves, and it is misleading to apply severely philosophical standards to either of them. The *Tenure*, just because it was written to urge the death penalty for Charles upon his judges in January, 1649, was bound to take a partial view of the limited problem of government that it undertook to treat. Its real subject was tyrannicide, and its discussions of Charles's claims to absolute sovereignty, to unchallengeable, hereditary possession of his throne, and to accountability for his acts only to God—the first three main divisions of its argument—were all subordinate to the final assertions of the people's right to choose and change their form of government and to punish their king even by death. In Allison's edition the fact that the pamphlet is above

all a rhetorical plea for the death of a "tyrant" is well illustrated by the appendix on the literature of tyrannicide and by an introductory study of its debt to works like Jean Bodin's *Republic* and George Buchanan's *Dialogue concerning the due Privilege of Government in Scotland*.<sup>1</sup> Yet Milton seems to have been willing to let the *Tenure* represent his abilities as a political thinker, for in the *Second Defence* he complacently referred to it as his "abstract consideration of what might lawfully be done against tyrants." When he republished it in 1650 he made few changes. The second edition—which is printed entire in this book—differs from the first only by some rather insignificant "additions" and "Testimonies also added out of the best and learnedest Protestant Divines."

83. The second edition of the *Way*, was a hasty transformation of the first from an appeal in February to the Rump Parliament (which dissolved under General Monck's pressure, 16 March, 1660) to an appeal to the nation two months later. "The changes introduced," says Mr. Clark,<sup>2</sup> "radically affect every page and paragraph," and nearly double the extent of the original essay. Before the new Parliament met on 26 April it was clear that Charles II was to be restored, but that outlook only emboldened Milton's criticism of monarchy and set him free to be frank in his belief that the defects in the parliamentary system could be corrected and republican institutions saved only by a preferably "perpetual grand council." The carefully revised style of the second edition suggests a deliberation that can hardly have extended to all the ideas in the pamphlet. The style gains piquancy from the fact that Milton was replying to critics of his first edition. He was angry with men like Sir Roger L'Estrange, who boasted that there were "ropes twisting" for stubborn republicans; and he was bitter at the mixture of impertinence and shrewd justice done to him by the royalist wits in *The Censure of the Rota*.<sup>3</sup> The insinuation that his ready and easy way to reestablish a commonwealth was a

<sup>1</sup> *De jure regni apud Scotos*.

<sup>2</sup> *The . . . Commonwealth*, edited by E. M. Clark, p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted in Parker's *Milton's Contemporary Reputation*.



Utopian dream was particularly galling, for the *Censure* itself recognized the weight of his ideas with educated republicans and the grip of his style on the public. It is important to understand that to many of his contemporaries Milton seemed a demagogue with a gift to wield "at will the fierce democracy." In both the *Tenure* and the *Way* he tried not unsuccessfully to fuse moral fervor and political wisdom with popular appeal, as the orators in republican Athens and Rome had done before him. The result was to make both tracts more rhetorical than philosophical. In the *Way* his rough sketch of a constitution—like his preliminary discussion of royal and popular rights in the *Tenure*—is rhetorically subordinate to the second and last main division of the tract, his rebuttal of every reason that could be advanced by the supporters of monarchy. Both tracts betray the confusion of ideas adapted to an urgent situation rather than to systematic statement of a political philosophy, but for that reason they give us the critical judgment as well as the prejudices of the "surly republican" in the most emphatic profile.

84. In writing the *Tenure* Milton spoke as lawyer for the Independents in Parliament both in their major cause against the king and in their minor quarrel with the Presbyterian members of the House of Commons, whom Colonel Pride had purged on 6 December, 1648. From that day until Cromwell assumed personal control in 1653, affairs were in the hands of the 77 members of the Rump who survived Pride's purge, and whose first important act was to set up the special "high court of justice" which sentenced Charles to death on 30 January, 1649. What Milton's motives were in devoting that December and early January to writing the tract, perhaps he himself did not know. When his services were recognized by the appointment as Secretary for Foreign Tongues to the Council of State in the following March, he was undoubtedly surprised. Professor Haller<sup>4</sup> may be right in attributing an ambition for "freedom to exercise a gift for leadership, for demagoguery if one will," to Milton as well as to the great Leveller, John Lil-

<sup>4</sup> *Rise of Puritanism*, p. 287.

burne, from whom he was "in one way a world removed"; but we must remember the conviction of biographers like his nephew, Edward Philips, and Jonathan Richardson, that his pamphlets were written out of an irresistible sense of duty. It is easier to convict him of fanaticism than it is of any kind of self-interest except pride. Aubrey seems to have believed that not a word of his great attacks upon Charles was written with any personal animosity. A reading of *Eikonoklastes* and the defenses of the English people will hardly confirm Aubrey, but it does show how clearly Milton envisaged Charles as the enemy of Parliament. There is no room here to trace the mistakes on both sides in the Civil Wars which led Milton to think of Parliament as at last being "employed by the whole body of the people as a check upon the wild domination of the king."<sup>5</sup> We can only accept the fact that the army and the Independents in the House of Commons saw the situation so, and observe how the warfare of ideas between the two parties is reflected in the *Tenure*.

85. One of the first ideological skirmishes to be fought when Charles and Parliament put armed forces into the field was over the question which was the aggressor, and what rights each had if its position could be proved purely defensive. A favorite stand of the Parliament men was that taken by Philip Hunton in his *Treatise of Monarchy*.<sup>6</sup> If England was a limited rather than absolute monarchy, and if the king overstepped the bounds of his authority, then, said Hunton, Englishmen as individuals were under a solemn obligation to decide whether the Parliament was right in judging it necessary to take arms "to save the constitution."<sup>7</sup> English constitutional theory had long regarded legislative authority as exercised by "the king in Parliament," and in the hands of a skilful lawyer like William Prynne the idea of the oneness of "the king in (and with) Parliament"<sup>8</sup> could be twisted to make personal support of Charles into

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<sup>5</sup> *A Second Defence*, C.E. VIII, 151.

<sup>6</sup> May, 1643.

<sup>7</sup> J. W. Allen, *English Political Thought, 1603-1660*, p. 454.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 439 and 468.

treason to him, and active support of the parliamentary forces into the highest loyalty to the Crown. Without raising the question which party was the aggressor in the war or in the clash between Charles, standing on his royal prerogative, and Parliament, defending its privileges against him before the control of the militia became an issue between them, Prynne would have the constitutional principle of limited monarchy itself the basis of a presumption something like that which made Abraham Lincoln regard secession as rebellion. From Parliament's point of view any divergence between itself and the king might be regarded as an attempt of his to break their union, and so it could be treated as treason to him. This was in fact the reasoning used in a tract called *The Kingdomes Case*, which was printed 1 May, 1643 by order of the Committee of the House of Commons concerning printing. The defense of the law, the protection of the people, and the king's own understanding of his office were all held to depend on an affirmative answer to the question on the title page: "Whether the Kings Subjects of this Realm of *England* may or ought to aid and assist each other, in repressing the persons now assembled together under the name of the Kings Army."

86. The affirmative answer to this question implied a contractual theory of the kingship, in which the nation or Parliament was the stronger partner. To support it, history was interpreted as we find it in the *Tenure*. The right of every man to defend himself, "for ease, for order, and lest each man should be his own partial judge," was vested in magistrates. When experience proved that they abused their power, they were subjected to laws; and when they proved lawless, "oaths were taken from all kings and magistrates at their first instalment, to do impartial justice by law, . . . with express warning that if the king or magistrate proved unfaithful to his trust, the people would be disengaged." The ramifications of the contractual theory can be appreciated only with the help of Mr. Gough's<sup>9</sup> study of its roots in medieval and ancient

<sup>9</sup> J. W. Gough, *The Social Contract: A Critical Study of its Development* (Oxford, 1936).

thought, as well as of its revolutionary prestige in the Renaissance. Men with republican sympathies looked everywhere for it—in British history, in the classics, in the Bible, and in reason and natural law. They tried, like the anonymous author of *The Unlimited Prerogative of Kings subverted*, to establish it by denying that William I won absolute power when he conquered England in 1066, and declared that Englishmen agreed to serve him as their Liege Lord and Sovereign only on condition that “he would promise to govern . . . according to these Laws and Customes, to which he consented, as all the Kings of England have done since.”<sup>10</sup> Similarly in *The Tenure* Milton twice stressed the Conqueror’s acceptance of the oaths that made him a limited monarch. This national precedent seemed to classically educated Englishmen to tally with Aristotle’s definition of a king as one “who governs for the good and profit of his people, and not for his own ends.” For the Puritan masses who knew their Bibles better than they did the classics, ample Biblical corroboration for the principle was forthcoming. “The Scripture is very pregnant and satisfying,” wrote Henry Parker in *The People’s Right*,<sup>11</sup> “that the proper end of government was the good of the governed . . . and not that the Prince was elected for his pomp, or magnificence. . . . As for the Prince, the Law of God is most express in that, he is not to make his advancement any ground of lifting up his heart above his brethren: he is enjoyned to that comportment which suits with a Brother, not a Lord: and to be so farre from lifting up his hand insultingly, as not to be inflated in his thoughts vain-gloriously.”

87. In 1643–4 the Presbyterian clergy had been forward in justifying Parliament for resisting the king on constitutional and biblical grounds. One of their leaders, Stephen Marshall, wrote in reply to the royal journal, *Mercurius Aulicus* (which was published at Oxford, and which he called *Mendacium Aulicum* or *The Court Liar*) to assert “the lawfulness of the Parliament’s taking up Defensive Arms,” and to justify it,

<sup>10</sup> *The Unlimited Prerogative of Kings subverted* (1642), p. B2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> *Jus populi* (1644), p. 19.

"briefly and learnedly,"<sup>12</sup> in the light of scripture. Parliament did not scruple to turn the Anglicans out of the London pulpits, and one of the grievances of the royalists became the propaganda against them that went on continually before the great London congregations. They protested and jeered, and the parliamentarians sorrowed that "the City Preachers are railed at for satisfying our Consciences in the justifiableness of a defensive warre."<sup>13</sup> As the Presbyterians lost control in Parliament, however, they became less unfriendly to Charles, and after Pride's purge they became his strongest and most eloquent supporters. It is at them, of course, that Milton is pointing in his opening attack on those who had "borne arms against their king, divested him, disannointed him, nay, cursed him all over in their pulpits and their pamphlets," only to change their tune as their party interest altered, and to end by supporting Charles at the crisis in January, 1649. In the *Second Defence* this attack against the Presbyterians was renewed, and their sympathy for King Charles was mercilessly traced to their monopoly of the income of the established church. For many of the army leaders and the Independents in the Rump in 1649 disestablishment of the church and religious toleration had become no less dearly cherished objects than the punishment of the king itself. On the other hand, the Presbyterians had come to regard themselves as the champions of established property interests of all kinds; and their champion, Clement Walker, accused the Independents of "hopes to divide the power and profit of the land between themselves by £1000 and £2000 in a morning shared amongst the godly."<sup>14</sup> Milton's opposition to the Presbyterians, of course, went back to the time of *Areopagitica*. As events made them friendly to Charles and brought the Independents in the army into a mortal quarrel with him, Milton's sympathies were consistently with the men who felt their way through the confused debates at Putney and Whitehall in 1647-8 to the view of kingship and of their king which

<sup>12</sup> *A Copy of a Letter written by Mr. Stephen Marshall, etc.* (1643).

<sup>13</sup> Henry Parker, *The Contra-Replicant* (1644), p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Clement Walker, *The History of Independency* (1648), p. 25.

finally resolved them to put Charles on trial for his life.<sup>15</sup> In January, 1649, he was ready to accept the full implication of the resolve of the House of Commons that "the People are, under God, the original of all just power;" and "that the Commons of England in Parliament assembled, being chosen by and representing the People, have the supreme power in this nation."<sup>16</sup>

88. When Milton wrote that "The power of kings and magistrates . . . is committed to them in trust for the people," he was in a stronger position historically than most modern readers understand. Though it did not suit him to appeal to Catholic tradition, he must have known that St. Thomas Aquinas had declared a king who was unfaithful to his trust to be unworthy of obedience, on the ground that "it is not rebellion to depose and kill one who is himself a rebel."<sup>17</sup> Indeed, St. Thomas approved of an elective type of monarchy so limited by "an aristocracy of merit" as to imply a form of government not unlike that by a grand council such as Milton suggested in the *Way*. Medieval constitutional theory corresponded with St. Thomas's view. Summing it up early in the fourteenth century, Marsiglio of Padua stressed "the rights of the people . . . with a boldness and clearness that might have satisfied Knox and Buchanan themselves."<sup>18</sup> Obviously an acknowledgement of the resemblance of the principles of *The Tenure* to those of St. Thomas would not have set well with Milton's intolerantly Protestant readers, and a parallel between his doctrine of tyrannicide and those of the great Cardinal Bellarmine or of the Jesuit, Juan de Mariana, might have been embarrassing. In quoting the great French publicist, Jean Bodin,<sup>19</sup> as Milton several times did in *The Tenure*, it was wise and not disin-

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<sup>15</sup> In his Introduction to these debates in *Puritanism and Liberty*, A. S. P. Woodhouse has an admirable analysis of their relations to Milton's thought.

<sup>16</sup> J. R. Tanner, *English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century*, p. 153.

<sup>17</sup> G. P. Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> Hume Brown, *George Buchanan*, p. 274.

<sup>19</sup> See *The Tenure*, notes 44 and 51.

genuous to refer to him in a way that would identify him only to readers well enough read to be aware of the skeptical range and boldness of his writings as well as of his attachment to Catholicism. It is hardly just to interpret Milton's repeated appeals to Martin Luther in *The Tenure* as an effort to exaggerate the condemnation of tyrants by the Protestant reformers. It is said that the context of Luther's warning to the German princes at the time of the peasant disturbances in Münster—"such is the state of things at this day that men neither can, nor will, nor indeed ought to endure longer the domination of you Princes"<sup>20</sup>—as Milton found it in Sleidan's *Chronicle of Our Time*—gives "an impression quite the contrary of the doctrine supported by Milton." The full context of Luther's words, however, is Sleidan's entire fifth book, which tells the story of the reformer's effort to persuade Thomas of Münster's peasants to drop their armed rebellion, and at the same time to teach the nobles the lessons that they were too proud to learn from the rebels. When the peasants became violent and spread anarchy, it is true that Luther supported the princes in their armed repression; but that fact did not make his previous defense of them to the princes any the less sincere. The words of Luther which Milton quoted from Sleidan's *Chronicle* are themselves seemingly intended there by Luther to be an echo—and therefore a justification—of the language of the peasants' indictment of their oppressors. It is significant that the anonymous *Short History of the Anabaptists* (1642) began by stressing the fact that Luther exhorted "the Princes, Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Empire . . . for God's sake and their own peace and safety, to use their subjects and tenants like men, not like beasts made for the yoke and the slaughter." In his political thinking generally, Luther held that royal power is limited by a contract of some kind with the people. John Calvin was consistently developing Lutheran ideas when he "asserted that the king should be resisted, when he violated his rights, not by private men, but by elected magistrates to whom the guardianship of the people's rights should be particularly

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, notes 201 and 202.

entrusted.”<sup>21</sup> In the hands of Calvin’s disciple, Hubert Lanquet, or Duplessis-Mornay (or whoever it was who wrote the *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*), the right of the people to reclaim royal power from a tyrant and punish him was as firmly asserted as it was by Milton—subject to the Calvinistic principle that only legally constituted magistrates might take action against the unjust king. That principle, of course, was fully satisfied in England by the fact that Parliament was acting against Charles. In impeaching him and declaring the right of Parliament to interpret and virtually to make the law in his case, the Independents, like good Calvinists, were observing the declaration of Henry Parker in 1643, that “the Royall and Politique power of our Kingdome in all causes and over all Persons is properly in the *Parliament*.”<sup>22</sup>

89. Milton’s stand in *The Tenure*, then, was the traditional one among Christians generally, Catholic and Protestant, Lutheran and Calvinist, and—as he took particular pains to indicate—Presbyterian. The best reply that the Presbyterians could make to reasoning like his, since they had done everything in their power to discredit the excellent legal position of Charles and his supporters by asserting Parliament’s supremacy, was to fall back on general philosophical principles and plead, like Thomas Hobbes and Robert Filmer, that monarchy was the only alternative to anarchy in the nation. It is interesting to recall that Filmer, who is better known for his *Patriarcha*, brought out a dogmatic and feeble defense of that position in 1648 in *The Necessity of the Absolute Power of Kings*. The claim of Parliament to be superior to the law is answered on the first page of that pamphlet by Filmer’s declaration that without absolute independence of the laws a king is impotent. “And that is it for which the Law saith, that *The Prince is acquitted from the Power of the Lawe*.” Monarchist sympathizers were eloquent in painting the lawless violence of men in a state of nature, or in the state of degeneracy to which Adam’s sin had

<sup>21</sup> Preserved Smith, *The Age of the Reformation* (1920), p. 597.

<sup>22</sup> If, as is likely, Parker wrote *Maximes Unfolded*, he wrote it as a not yet entirely reconstructed Presbyterian.



reduced them. The greatest of them all, Thomas Hobbes, made the natural "warfare of all men with all men" the basis of the most famous of the philosophical defenses of absolute sovereignty. His basic assumption, it is important to note, was common to the most liberal and the most Puritan writers of the time. Without magistracy, said Roger Williams,<sup>23</sup> "*Men, like Fishes, would hunt and devoure each other.*" A consequence of this fact, he admitted, was that "*Magistracy in generall is of God*" [regardless of whether the magistrate be pagan or Christian]; but, he added emphatically in a statement which is closely paralleled in the *Tenure*, "*Magistracy in speciall for the severall kinds of it is of Men. 1 Peter, 2.13.*" Here the king's champions—and particularly his ecclesiastical champions—joined issue. "We grant," said Dr. Ferne,<sup>24</sup> "that the power of the Prince receiving qualification by joint consent of himselfe and the people, is limited by the laws made with such consent; but the power itself is of God originally and chiefly, which we prove by Scripture and Reason." In his proof, scripture abounds more than reason, and far more than it does in Milton's *Tenure*. Texts like "By me kings reign" (Proverbs viii, 15) and "I have said, ye are gods" (Psalm xxxii, 6) are used to indicate that kings reign by divine right; while the most solemn admonition to all men in arms against the king is found in Romans xiii, 1-2: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

90. The ingenious use of scripture to support the doctrines of the divine right of kings and the damnable wrong of resisting them has some strange reflections in the *Tenure*. In 1640 Convocation had ordered four annual readings in all churches of the canon declaring, "The most high and sacred order of kings is of divine right," founding it on "the prime laws of

<sup>23</sup> *The Bloody Tenent*, p. 230.

<sup>24</sup> Henry Ferne, *Resolving of Conscience* (Oxford, 1642), p. 13. This tract had a second edition in 1643, and Ferne later replied in *Conscience Satisfied* to the storm of protest that he had aroused.

nature and express texts of the Old and New Testaments.”<sup>25</sup> In practical defense of this canon Dr. Ferne’s tract, *Resolving of Conscience*, brought the whole weight of biblical authority to bear against tender consciences in the parliamentary forces. Countless sermons like Bishop Ussher’s *The Sovereigns Power and the Subjects Duty*, made the same dangerous appeal. The threat of hell in Romans xiii, 2, and the warning not to fear “them that can kill the body” in Matthew x, 28, were recklessly used to deter recruits from Cromwell’s army. To this argument the only reply was to bring sweeping biblical authority against kingship, as Milton tried to do in the *Tenure*, and as Thomas Paine did a century later when he devoted the first chapters of *Common Sense* to proof that “monarchy and hereditary succession” are “ranked in Scripture as one of the sins of the Jews, for which a curse in reserve is denounced against them.”<sup>26</sup>

91. Perhaps the strangest of the royalist appeals to scripture was the interpretation of David’s words in the fifty-first Psalm, “Against thee only have I sinned” (uttered, supposedly, after he had caused the death of Uriah the Hittite) as meaning that a king was answerable only to God for even the extremest acts of tyranny. Milton is puzzlingly disturbed by the weight which this proof-text carried. Today we are content to share his doubts about David’s meaning in “the pathological words of a psalm,” but in 1649 it was not easy to brush them aside. Sir Walter Raleigh had quoted them in his *History of the World*, in a passage which many Englishmen would not willingly let die; and the royalist justice, David Jenkins, had recently observed that “the saying of Sir Walter Raleigh is verified with us; kings are made by God and laws divine, and by human laws only declared to be kings.” And thereupon he observes that David thought himself accountable only to God; “to thee only have I sinned, Psal. 51:4.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> S. R. Gardiner, *History of England IX*, 145.

<sup>26</sup> *Writings of Thomas Paine* (ed. by M. D. Conway, New York, 1896) IV, 97.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted by Dunham and Pargellis, *Complaint and Reform in England*, p. 638.

92. The best reply to royalist appeals to the Bible was to argue that Christ had once for all condemned kingship. In the *Way* Milton does that by interpreting Jesus' rebuke of the ambition of his disciples, James and John, as a condemnation of the "lordship" of monarchs. If Milton seems to force Jesus' casual stricture upon the "lordship" of "the kings of the gentiles" beyond its real meaning, he can be excused by the examples of countless Puritans before him who had interpreted this passage as disposing of Charles and all his court. In the *Tenure*, when Milton undertook to prove his case "Mosaically," he was preparing to use an equally sweeping and a more interesting argument from the Old Testament against monarchy. It consisted in simply regarding the early Jewish polity as a commonwealth and idealizing it as he did in *Paradise Lost*. His picture there of the Hebrew government "in the wide wilderness" is a little idyll of primitive republicanism. Its only clear feature is the senate of elders—like the grand council in the *Way*—somewhat vaguely elected,

"Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordain'd."<sup>28</sup>

93. This picture was no mere fancy of Milton's. It represented an historical view that was taken seriously enough to be attacked in this very year, 1660, by Matthew Wren—soon to become Bishop of Ely—in *Monarchy Asserted, Or the State of Monarchicall and Popular Government*. Wren cast doubts—albeit not too confidently—on the existence among the Hebrews of the sort of commonwealth that can be assembled "by the mediation of a Representative Body,"<sup>29</sup> and he was very much perturbed by the biblical support that James Harrington claimed for his liberal agrarian principles in *Oceana*. "He [Harrington] is told by Me," wrote Wren, "That this division of the Land look't not at the Government, . . . He replies, *That God in ordaining the Balance of Israel, having ordained the Cause, ordained also the Effect, which was Popular Govern-*

<sup>28</sup> P.L. XII, 226.

<sup>29</sup> P. 153.

ment."<sup>30</sup> Although Milton disliked Harrington's proposal to "balance" real estate in England by a periodic cancellation of sales of land on a principle like that of the Hebrew years of jubilee, he doubtless approved heartily of Harrington's wish to give England a senate on the Mosaic model of choosing the members, "not by *hereditary right*, or in regard to the greatness of their estates onely; but by *election* for *their excellent parts*."<sup>o</sup>

94. "Among the Jews," says Milton in the *Way*, "the supreme council of seventy, called the Sanhedrin, founded by Moses, in Athens that of Areopagus, in Sparta that of the ancients, in Rome the senate, consisted of members chosen for terms of life." On those examples his proposal for a perpetual council in England mainly rested. Which of the four historical examples seemed the most impressive to him it is not hard to tell. Of course, as every biographer from John Aubrey down has observed, he was profoundly moved all his life by the liberty for which men fought in the Graeco-Roman world. His recurrence to the expulsion of the Tarquin kings from Rome in both the *Tenure* and the *Way* betrays his readiness to see Charles as a modern Tarquin the Proud and the parliamentary leaders of 1649 as men inspired by L. Junius Brutus' hatred of tyranny. The many youthful entries about such matters in his *Common-place Book* prove Milton's susceptibility to the story of Roman liberty. Those entries also prove that he had always thought critically about that political problem. Under the heading *Libertas* he noted that nations seem to get the kind of government that they deserve; questioned whether, when liberty has once been lost, it can ever be recovered; and opined that, when M. Junius Brutus and Cassius assassinated Caesar, they made a tragic mistake in supposing that Rome could ever recover its freedom. This pessimistic view, however, gave way under the tonic influence of Machiavelli, whom he quotes in the *Common-place Book* as a defender of republican institutions. Drastic reforms, the entry suggests, can restore lost liberty anywhere.

<sup>30</sup> P. 134. *Oceana* was first published in 1656.

<sup>o</sup> James Harrington's *Oceana*, edited by Liljegren, p. 24.

By reforms Milton can hardly have meant convulsions like the civil wars so soon to come in England. Rather he meant such ideal yet practical institutions as the Venetians were supposed to have in their immortal state with its almost self-perpetuating council. He meant such government as Plato tried to devise in the *Laws*, with its complicated devices for the election of the Nocturnal Councillors who give the state a truly rational administration.<sup>31</sup> Wherever in history government had been in the hands of a self-perpetuating aristocracy of merit Milton found a working example of the principles that he tried to make acceptable in the *Way*.

95. That he should have assumed the Hebrew commonwealth as his best example is not surprising, and the fact may have more than is usually suspected to do with the devolutionary features of his plan, which are obscured for most readers by its undemocratic tone. He undoubtedly thought of ancient Hebrew institutions somewhat as the Dutch scholar, Pieter van der Kun, did in his *Republic of the Hebrews*.<sup>32</sup> There the Sanhedrin is represented as perpetuating the best features of the Mosaic council of seventy elders until the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans. That it was composed of very carefully chosen representatives of the best families, selected for intellectual perfection and spiritual gifts, and obviously representing the wealthy upper middle class, was inevitable. What is surprising is Van der Kun's insistence upon the importance of the provincial towns in the ancient Jewish world. Their wealth and independence are stressed even more than their union through the temple worship at Jerusalem. Firm protection was afforded them against domination from Jerusalem, and their economic stability was assured by the principle of periodic restoration of alienated land to its poor, former owners. This last feature, which attracted Harrington, we have seen that Milton could not accept. He does however seem to have been sympathetic with the idea that provincial towns should be as nearly autono-

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<sup>31</sup> *Laws*, p. 712-14.

<sup>32</sup> Petri Cunaei *de Republica Hebraeorum* III, Leyden, 1632. Translated by Clement Barksdale in 1653.

mous as possible, "so it be . . . subordinate to the general power and union of the whole republic." This principle of decentralization, of which we think as distinctively modern in the evolution of political theory, was of course not in harmony with the growing trend toward increasing the authority of Parliament. It was hardly in harmony with the fast developing need of the country for an efficient, uniform administration of its army, judiciary, and system of communications. Milton's naturally independent nature inclined him to value local liberties, and his youthful opposition to the bishops had stiffened his dislike of the centralization of ecclesiastical authority in London and Canterbury. He disliked also the centralization and monopoly of higher education in Oxford and Cambridge, and in *Of Education* he proposed to shatter the prestige of the two great universities by providing inexpensive higher education in his ideal academies, one of which he imagined as being available near every large town in England.

96. Among the permanently valuable things in Milton's republicanism we may recognize his consistent hatred of tyranny and all arbitrary authority, his consequent faith in decentralization and his respect for civil rights, and his enduring confidence in parliaments in spite of the weaknesses of the Long Parliament which he diagnosed in the *Way* and the *History of Britain*. Even in the characterization of Cromwell in *The Second Defense*, though Milton was championing the Protector, he declared against one-man government. Toland was probably right in believing that there was no trace of subservience to Cromwell in the whole mass of state documents in which the two men were involved. Pride may have played a part in this, just as it may have been the mainspring of the assault on the very idea of kingship in *The Tenure* and the *Way*. Milton had some pride, but his hatred of kings rested on better ground. He justified it as he did his contempt for mobocracy. Most kings and all mobs, he thought, violated the law of nature and of reason that only the fittest should rule.

97. Milton's uncompromising devotion to government by an aristocracy of merit has made him unpopular with some modern

readers for reasons which it is worth while to compare with those that made him hated in 1660. We are no longer deeply moved by his aristocratic ideal, either as it was embodied in the idealized Sanhedrin of the Hebrews, or in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, or in St. Thomas' *Summa Theologica*, or in Calvin's *Institutes*. The classical and medieval conceptions have become historical curiosities, and Milton's Puritan political faith has come to seem only a part of Calvinism's exaggeration of Christianity's traditional attempt to make men conform to a higher law than that of nature. We perhaps recall that Calvin himself accepted a theoretically more democratic control over his aristocracy than Milton was willing to admit over his grand council in the *Way*. Weber's theory of the relation of Calvinism to the rise of capitalism makes us see Milton, like Calvin, as a champion of the capitalist class to which he so definitely belonged by inheritance. We forget the part played in the seventeenth century by the Puritan aristocracy of merit in breaking down barriers between all classes. Milton's ready and easy way to establish a free commonweath hardly seems to modern democrats to promise freedom. Most of them are of the opinion of his later contemporary, Lord Halifax, that "The rules of a Commonwealth [as Milton understood them] are too hard for the Bulk of Mankind to come up to."<sup>33</sup> In despair over humanity's indifference to the ideals of a commonwealth, Halifax accepted the monarchy of Charles II as the best form of government available for England.

## VI. THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

98. The few translated fragments of Milton's *Christian Doctrine* in this book represent about one twentieth of the 745 manuscript pages in the original Latin. Obviously, they cannot represent the whole work any better than this short introduction can indicate the background, growth, and meaning even of its chapters on God, the Son of God, the Fall of Adam,

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<sup>33</sup> *The Character of a Trimmer*, p. 4.

and Christian liberty. For us its meaning consists primarily in its value as an unconscious commentary on *Paradise Lost*. If Mr. Sewell is right in believing that Milton's Arian or "anti-Trinitarian" views were written into the *Christian Doctrine* only after *Paradise Lost* was finished, and that they clash with more orthodox views in the poem, then the treatise loses part of its interest and becomes hardly more than a document in Milton's old age. Biographically and theologically it remains important, but the light that it has to shed on *Paradise Lost* becomes far less clear than was assumed when it was quoted some seventy times in the notes to the first volume of the present series. If, however, we agree with Professor Kelley that the theology of both works is consistently heterodox, and if we accept his account in *This Great Argument* of the treatise's growth from something like a textbook undertaken shortly after Milton's return from Italy, if not earlier, to something like its present form about 1658-60, then *Paradise Lost* can be read with confidence in its light.

99. Recent scholarship has paid perhaps too much attention to Milton's sources, and its best results tend—like Mr. Kelley's studies of the influence of Wolleb's *Compendium of Christian Theology* on *Christian Doctrine*—to minimize the importance of the particular source studied. Milton's first words acknowledge his familiarity and his dissatisfaction with the many Protestant treatises, "wherein the chief heads of Christian doctrine are set forth, sometimes briefly, sometimes in a more enlarged and methodical order." To compare him with any single figure in the host of Reformation theologians—as was done as recently as 1926 in the case of Servetus,<sup>1</sup> is certain to exaggerate a single influence. Milton may have admired the young doctor who in 1531, at the age of twenty-two or less, published *Seven Books on Errors about the Trinity*, and whom Calvin sent to the stake when he was hardly past forty; but his Arianism had a broader rootage than any one book. Servetus' sweeping anti-Trinitarianism implied a pantheistic view of the world, and so it was argued that Milton's "conception of God is

<sup>1</sup> Martin A. Larson, "Milton and Servetus," *P.M.L.A.* XLI, 891-934.



based upon a pantheistic theory of the universe" and that his pantheism is "thoroughgoing." This conclusion, of course, is hardly consistent with M. Saurat's attempt in *Milton, Man and Thinker* to show that Milton was a pantheist because he was influenced by Hebrew thought and drank deep of the "current of pantheism" which "runs through the Zohar."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Sewell's flat contradiction of such opinions when he says that "Milton is no pantheist,"<sup>3</sup> seems to be sustained by the account of creation in *Christian Doctrine* I, vii. There a point is made of proving that in spite of its divine origin, matter is as corruptible as spirit. Although God is the material cause of the universe, Milton thought of him as such only on the principle that spirit, because it is more excellent than matter, "virtually and essentially contains within itself the inferior substance." To understand his thought, we must first know something about the Aristotelian doctrine of material, formal, efficient, and final causes.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, we should study Hebrew, Greek, and medieval conceptions of the derivation of matter from spirit, for Milton seems to have regarded matter somewhat as Plato does in the tenth book of the *Laws*. He thought of it as whatever spirit has or needs to work on. In his *Art of Logic* (I, vi), he defines it as 'eternal' because it is common to all things that are and to those that are not, and he compares it to the principles that govern the arts. To follow all the theological ramifications of his thought more studies like Professor Fletcher's on *Milton's Rabbinical Readings*, and Professor Arnold Williams' projected work on the Renaissance commentaries on Genesis must be made. The theology of the Italian neoplatonist, Marsilio Ficino, in *The Christian Religion*, and its influence must be considered, and so must that of Laelius and Faustus Socinus, about the promulgation of whose views in a translation of the Racovian catechism we know that Milton was officially questioned in 1652.<sup>5</sup> Finally the results of all

<sup>2</sup> (1925), p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> *A Study in Milton's Christian Doctrine*, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> The importance of the principle in Milton's thinking is clear in *Art of Logic*, especially Chapters 3, 4, and 26.

<sup>5</sup> Masson, *Life of Milton* IV, 438-9.

such investigations will have to be carefully checked against every word in Milton's *Christian Doctrine* itself. If the way is long, Professor Curry's study of *Milton's Scale of Nature*<sup>6</sup> has shown that it commands some striking views of *Paradise Lost* and can be made as interesting as the road to Xanadu. In the end it must lead to his conclusion that, instead of being a pantheist, Milton was a theopantheist, or a believer that, though God is the omnipresent, material cause of the universe, he cannot be identified with it. That conclusion would harmonize with Milton's belief that in Eden Adam was perfectly free to obey God or not, and with the Arminianism in *Paradise Lost*, which ignores the Calvinistic doctrine that men are predestined to heaven or hell, and tries to justify God's ways to man by making Adam's individual descendants responsible, if they fail to accept redemption through the mediation of Christ.

100. The most illuminating approach to the sources of *Christian Doctrine*—at least for readers who are not well-read in theology—begins with the fact that the treatise seems to have been undertaken as a project in Milton's school. Edward Phillips recalls that his uncle was in the habit of occasionally dictating "some part of a tractate which he thought fit to collect from the ablest of divines which had written of that subject, Amesius, Wollebeus, &c. viz. *A Perfect System of Divinity*." Milton doubtless dictated excerpts from the original Latin of William Ames's *Medulla Theologiae*, which was translated in 1642 as *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, and from the *Compendium Theologiae Christianae* of the Swiss theologian, John Wolleb.<sup>7</sup> Inevitably, these works left a permanent mark on *Christian Doctrine*. If space permitted the reproduction here of Wolleb's nine-page chart of the substance of his *Compendium*, it would give us a key to some important details of Milton's plan, especially to the analysis of men's duties to God and to one another in the second book of the *Christian Doc-*

<sup>6</sup> Stanford Studies in Language and Literature, p. 192.

<sup>7</sup> See *This Great Argument*, pp. 25-7 and *passim*, in *P.M.L.A.* L, 156-65. Sewell makes claims for Wolleb, Chapter ii.

*trine*. For the leading ideas and the chapter headings of his first book we might find parallels in any of the theological works of the period—beginning with documents as simple as the Westminster Catechism or as popular as the immense *Principles of Christian Religion, with a large Body of Divinity, Methodically and Familiarly Handled by way of Question and Answer, For the Use of the Family*, which was constantly republished as by Archbishop Ussher—and going on to more formal treatises like Calvin's *Institutes*. The influence of men like Ames and Wolleb on Milton may not have been very serious, for he can hardly have sneered at all *medullae* as he did in the preface of his first divorce tract without thinking of Ames; and we have a famous jibe in one of Robert South's sermons<sup>8</sup> at "Wollebius in English" as a part of "the usual furniture of old women's closets," together with *The Bruised Reed* and *Crumbs of Comfort*. Yet the prestige of books of this type was tremendous, and their structural likenesses and doctrinal resemblances and contrasts with *Christian Doctrine* are most enlightening.

101. Perhaps a better key to Milton's plan than Wolleb's chart would be William Perkins' schematic "resolution of the Creede" and—if its reproduction here were practicable—the "Table" which he published with *The Golden Chaine: or, The Description of Theologie, containing the order of the causes of Salvation and Damnation, according to Gods word*.<sup>9</sup> Perkins' "Table" consists of a chain of about sixty little links, each representing a theological principle. At the top are three circles standing for the Trinity, and so arranged as to illustrate the doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds both from the Father and the Son. Then come five links representing God's "foreknowledge," "his decree," and "predestination," "the decree of Election," and "the Decree of Reprobation." These are the subjects which Milton treats immediately after

<sup>8</sup> *Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions by Robert South* (London, 1843) I, 67.

<sup>9</sup> First published 1597(?). I have used the Huntington Library copy of 1600.

his chapter "Of God" under the headings, "Of the Divine Decrees" and "Of Predestination." His opinions about them were, of course, not those of the orthodox Calvinist, Perkins, who defined God's decree, in so far as it concerns man, as "Predestination: which is the decree of God, by the which he hath ordained all men to a certain and everlasting estate: that is, either to salvation or condemnation, for his own glorie." Nor would Perkins have approved of Milton's heterodox chapters "Of the Son of God," and "Of the Holy Spirit." Perkins' chapter on the fall of Adam has a pivotal position in the Table, and an importance rather like that which Milton gives to it in chapter XI, "Of the Fall of our First Parents, and of Sin." Perkins' temperament and his Calvinism made him expand the theme of Milton's next chapter "Of the Punishment of Sin" into thirteen links showing the process of reprobation all the way to its end in "Death eternall in Hell." To this topic Milton devoted only two chapters, for he had now completely abandoned Calvinistic thinking on this subject, and gone over to the Arminian position which he had once condemned, in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* II, iii.

102. The second of Milton's chapters on the punishment of sin—"Of the Death of the Body"—enjoys an undeserved prominence in M. Saurat's *Milton, Man and Thinker*.<sup>10</sup> Milton's 'mortalist heresy,' as Mr. George Williamson has shown,<sup>11</sup> was discussed in the seventeenth century by essayists like Sir Thomas Browne as well as by several theologians. From Drummond's *Cypress Grove* to Baxter's *Dying Thoughts*, men debated it. Milton held that the soul, by its greater responsibility for sin, was more deserving than the body of the punishment of death which God warned Adam would be the penalty. To Milton's uncompromising logic, the doctrine of the resurrection applied equally to spirit and flesh. Milton accepted it, as he thought that he did everything else in his system, out of a rigorously logical interpretation of the Bible. Of course, his interests determined his approach to scripture, and that is why the plan

<sup>10</sup> pp. 310-322.

<sup>11</sup> "Milton and the Mortalist Heresy," *S.P.* XXXII (1935), pp. 553-79.

of *Christian Doctrine* includes much that has no counterpart in *The Golden Chaine*; but that treatise and others of its kind are an indispensable aid to understanding what Milton undertook to do in *Christian Doctrine*. His treatment of the experience of the Christian life itself in chapters xvii to xxv of his first book largely corresponds to Perkins' elaborate arrangement of forty-four links to represent the steps in the soul's redemption. Perkins has links which correspond with Milton's chapters "Of Repentance," "Of Justification," and "Of Glorification"; and Perkins gives zeal as prominent a place as Milton does among the Christian virtues.

103. Comparison of Milton's treatise with inferior works like Perkins' *Chaine* and Ames's *Medulla* must not be allowed to obscure the fact that the *Christian Doctrine*, when Milton finally left it in the hands of Daniel Skinner, was a great and virtually finished book addressed to an international audience. Evidently he hoped that its influence might rival that of works like Calvin's *Institutes*. But his purpose was less dogmatic than Calvin's. He came to believe, as he said in his little tract *Of True Religion* in 1673, that in spite of their errors the Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Socinians and Arminians were "no heretics." In *Christian Doctrine* he so far forgot his early Calvinism as to defend Anabaptist denial of baptism to infants, Arminian denial of the divine predestination of the reprobate to torment, and Socinian denial of equality with God to the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Christian Trinity. He was not trying to impose these opinions upon "all the churches of Christ and all who profess the Christian faith throughout the world," although the work is addressed to that audience. Above all the superstitious abuses to which religious faith is subject, he dreaded the implicit or uncritical faith which he assailed in *Of True Religion*. "No learned man but will confess" much profit from having read the controversial works of Arians, Anabaptists, Arminians, and Socinians, he said; and he wrote the *Christian Doctrine* as an example of the art and duty of reading such literature and weighing it in the light of the Bible. The background of the book was as international

as its audience was intended to be. If in 1642 Milton shared his friend Hartlib's hope that Christendom might be unified by means of a "Bodie of Practical Divinitie, which might easily be compiled out of our English authors and Translated into Latine for the generall Use of All Christians," his years of work on his great treatise made him less provincial in his internationalism.

104. Though modern editing has sometimes obscured the fact, the authority of the Bible in the *Christian Doctrine* is stronger than any other element except Milton's personality itself. Professor Harris Fletcher has counted<sup>12</sup> "over 7000 chapter and verse citations of Scripture" in it, "more than three-fourths of which include quotations." In Fletcher's study it becomes clear that, although Milton usually quoted from the Junius-Tremellius Latin Bible (as he usually did from the King James version in English), he constantly compared its readings of his proof-texts with the Hebrew, Greek, and even Syriac originals. His process of composing the *Christian Doctrine* was that of assembling over a long period of years all biblical texts in any way relating to the accepted doctrines of Christianity, and of criticizing the doctrines in their light. His care in checking and arranging his proof-texts, at least until blindness obliged him to rely on amanuenses, Professor Fletcher thinks, was most scrupulous; and the corrections which Bishop Sumner made in his translation in 1825 implied no criticism of his accuracy. In the fragments of the work in the present edition all the proof-texts immediately relating to every passage have been included, standing just as they do in Sumner's translation.

105. The best evidence of Milton's sincerity in compiling his treatise is his saturation in scripture. The reasons for that were partly historical. One of them was the direction given to independent thought all over Europe when Luther appealed from Rome to the Bible as the final authority in religion. When Henry VIII declared himself head of the English church, he had no choice but to make the Bible the prime nominal

<sup>12</sup> *The Use of the Bible in Milton's Prose*, p. 50.

doctrinal authority. Together with the tremendous popularity of Luther's Bible and of one English translation after another until the King James version in 1611, the revolt against Rome as the spiritual and cultural center of Europe led straight to the principle which John Locke stated in *A Letter concerning Toleration* (1689):<sup>13</sup> if confessions of faith "be conceived in the express words of scripture, there can be no question about them; because those are acknowledged by all Christians to be of divine inspiration."

106. Popular faith in such inspiration made perhaps a very large majority of Milton's contemporaries "superstitious"—as he put it in *Tetrachordon*—"of the letter." His close analysis of his proof-texts in the *Christian Doctrine* may seem like a form of that superstition; but, to a reader who knows anything about the spirit and technique which Erasmus and Beza brought to their editing of the Greek New Testament, its critical temper is clear. Though Milton always revolted against what he called in *Tetrachordon* mere verbal "straitness of text," he admired "the metropolitan language," Hebrew, and the Hebraic style of the Greek New Testament. Its Hebraic language, he said (voicing a generally accepted opinion of the time), "was the majesty of God, not filing the tongue of scripture to a gentilish idiom, but in a princely manner offering to them as to gentiles and foreigners grace and mercy, though not in foreign words, yet in a foreign style that might induce them to the fountains." Similarly John Dove reasoned that "the same idiotisme . . . in both Testaments, . . . continuall Hebraeismes as well in the newe as in the olde, doe shewe that they were written by one and the selfe-same spirit."<sup>14</sup> Inevitably Milton believed that the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in the New validated both. By our standards that belief may seem to imply a superstitious, or at least a questionably reasonable attitude toward the Bible; but we should remember that Grotius, in his treatise *On the Verity of the Christian Religion*, made the miraculous consistency of the two testaments a part

<sup>13</sup> *Works* (1824) V, 56.

<sup>14</sup> John Dove, *A Confutation of Atheisme* (1605), p. 46.

of his appeal to Mohammedans and Jews as well as Christians to test Christianity by the standards of reason. About the reasonableness of Milton's faith in the Bible opinions differ. In the *Nature of Episcopacy*,<sup>15</sup> which Milton quoted with approval in *Areopagitica*, Lord Brooke had said that "in expounding of Scripture," the "judge" must be "Scripture; but in finding out what is indifferent, *Recta Ratio*, right reason, must be Judge." With Lord Brooke's first principle Milton fully agreed. "The rule and canon of faith," he said in *Christian Doctrine* (I, xxx) "is Scripture alone." But in its interpretation—not only in matters indifferent, but for all purposes—Milton recognized the right of every believer to "interpret the Scripture for himself, inasmuch as he has the Spirit for his guide, and the mind of Christ is in him."

107. This implied definition of the Holy Spirit as the critical intelligence of individual readers of the Bible touches the two main aspects of what is usually regarded as Milton's heresy: his individualism in interpreting the Bible and his Arian conception of the Trinity. The former, of course, seemed to him the essence of orthodoxy, for he condemned all "implicit faith" as immoral. In defense of his unorthodox ideas about the Trinity he would have pleaded scripture, first reminding his critics—as he did in *Of True Religion*—that he no more denied the doctrine than the Arians and Socinians did, for they affirmed "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the Scripture and the apostolic creed." There is not room here to try to analyze his reasons for denying Christ's equality and identity with God, and for sharply subordinating the Holy Spirit to Christ, or to compare them—for example—with those advanced by John Biddle in *A Confession of Faith Touching the Holy Trinity According to the Scripture* (1648). A comparison of Milton's argument in detail with the Reverend Nicolas Estwick's reply to Biddle, *Pneumatologia: or, A Treatise of the Holy Ghost* (1648), would show how familiar not only Milton's main positions were to his contemporaries, but also the extent of his acceptance of some views of the question which were

<sup>15</sup> P. 13.



defended during the theological battles of the Civil War. Instead of magnifying his heresy, as Mr. Belloc does, it is more illuminating to observe with Canon Looten that his plan and thought in the *Christian Doctrine* strikingly resemble those in St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra gentiles*.<sup>16</sup> Milton sincerely believed that he wrote in the main Christian tradition and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, though for him the Spirit was less a being to be theologically defined than it was a power to be experienced as the inspiration of his poetry and also as the critical faculty of his own mind. His conception was hardly more heretical than that of the great Anglican divine, Jeremy Taylor, who spoke of the Spirit in his *Great Exemplar* as "an eternal bond to keep our reason from returning to the darkness of the old creation." Milton was far less heretical than Spinoza, who made St. Paul's saying that good works are the fruit of the Spirit the basis of a declaration that "the Holy Spirit is nothing else but that tranquillity of mind and peace of conscience which ariseth in us from doing good."

108. In Milton's chapters on the Son of God and Christ the Redeemer his Arianism is distinct enough to explain the unwillingness of the English ambassador to Holland to arrange for posthumous publication for the *Christian Doctrine* in Leyden—a decision which led to its disappearance and oblivion until Bishop Sumner translated and published it in 1825. "Arians," said Ephraim Pagitt in his *Heresiography* (1645), "were called after the old Heretick *Arrius*, who was a Deacon of the Church of Alexandria. Achilles the Bishop being dead, and Arrius having not the Bishopricke given him, . . . which . . . he desired, *Alexander* being chosen, he infected the world with this heresie: he was condemned in the Councell of *Nice* by 318 Bishops under the Emperour *Constantine* the great, and banished: hee died as *Judas* the Traytor did, his Bowells falling out of his belly."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In J. Milton. *Quelques aspects de son génie* (Lille, 1938) Canon C. Looten takes issue (p. 200 and *passim*) with Hilaire Belloc's charges in *Milton* (1935).

<sup>17</sup> P. 118.

"The *Anti-Trinitarians*," Pagitt continued, "have renewed *Arrius* his old heresie, and they are called *Anti-Trinitarians* because they blaspheme and violate the Holy Trinity." Anti-trinitarianism, he concludes, alluding to the Socinians in Poland, of whom Milton speaks favorably in *Of True Religion*, "sprung up in *Polonia* . . . in the yeare of our Lord 1593." It is interesting to find Milton's arguments about the nature of Christ including those which Pagitt attributed to the modern Arians. "The eternall generation of the Son," said Pagitt,<sup>18</sup> they deny, as "against reason, and against truth"; and they recognize Christ as worthy to be called God only "by reason of his dominion," and not "in respect of his Essence." Two preachers of these views had gone to the block in 1611, and Pagitt recalled that "Queene *Elizabeth* of blessed memorie," had said, "she was very sorrowfull to heare that she had such Monsters in her Kingdome."

109. This is not the place to examine Milton's immense biblical evidence for his belief that the Son is "numerically" distinct from the Father, or to criticize his argument that, "if the Son be of the same essence with the Father" and also "coalesce with man," then it is impossible "to evade the inference, that man also is the same person with the Father." We may, however, observe that these are not the ideas of a pantheist or of one who denies the divinity of Christ. Milton thought of Christ's divinity first as the conscious power through which God created the universe. Secondly, he thought of it after Christ's incarnation as the redemptive force which Satan acknowledges in *Paradise Regained* by calling Christ a "perfect shape" of goodness, wisdom and justice, for the guidance of "kings and nations." Perhaps his thinking was influenced by the conception of Christ as the divine "idea and exemplar of the virtues" in the treatise of the great Florentine Neo-Platonist, Marsilio Ficino, *On the Christian Religion* (chap. 23). His positive view of Christ's function *as man* is too much overshadowed for clear development in *Christian Doctrine* by rebuttal of the orthodox view of Him as "the very selfsame

<sup>18</sup> P. 119.

substance in number"<sup>19</sup> with the Father. In *Areopagitica* and the anti-episcopal tracts, however, Christ appears as the teacher and exemplar of the virtues whom we find in Ficino,<sup>20</sup> and as the Truth expelling all errors which Ficino also identified<sup>21</sup> as Christ. Of course, this conception entered in Lord Brooke's Platonic essay *On the Nature of Truth*, and it can be traced in Comenius' *Great Didactic*, and in the thinking of the Cambridge Platonists. In his youth, Milton held it with a young revolutionary's intensity. It shaped his prayer in *Animadversions*<sup>22</sup>—"Thou art a God, thy nature is perfection"—for England's reconstruction by the pattern of Christ. In the background of his thinking in that tract is the outline of a theory unifying Christ as Truth or as teacher with the pre-incarnate Son through whom God created the world. As "the messenger and herald of heavenly truth from God to man," Milton believed, Christ was "to procreate a number of faithful men, making a kind of creation like to God's, by infusing . . . his likeness into them."<sup>23</sup> Christ's creative and exemplary powers were one, and gave hope of a new creation in England. Though the prophecy failed, the idea of Christ behind it never quite lost its revolutionary force or poetic value or theological interest for Milton.

110. The least acceptable element in Milton's scrupulously biblical theology today is his treatment of the fall of Adam, for he represents it as disobedience to an arbitrary command. "Adams fall," said Perkins in *The Golden Chaine* (p. 11), "was his willing revolting to disobedience by eating the forbidden fruite." Milton concurred. Instead of regarding the situation as compromising to the divine justice, he was as sure as St. Thomas Aquinas<sup>24</sup> that Adam's fall was the supreme human injustice to God. Of course, he recognized the devil's

<sup>19</sup> In Hooker's words, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* V, li, 1.

<sup>20</sup> *On the Christian Religion*, chapter xxi. Cf. *Animadversions*, C.E. III, 165.

<sup>21</sup> Chapter xxii.

<sup>22</sup> C.E. III, 147.

<sup>23</sup> C.E. III, 164.

<sup>24</sup> *Summa Theologica* I, ii, 82, 3.

contribution to the first sin, but would have agreed with his later contemporary, the liberal, Anglican preacher, Robert South, that "no man can justly charge his sins upon the devil." "How slyly and creepingly did he address himself to our first parents!" said South, in a passage that illuminates the ninth book of *Paradise Lost*. "Surely his pride would never have let him do [so], could he have effected their downfall by force, without temptation."<sup>25</sup>

III. Milton's justification of the ways of God to man consisted in absolute acceptance of this interpretation of the sin in the garden of Eden, and in its transformation into a "fortunate fall." Professor Lovejoy<sup>26</sup> has traced the history of the idea of the "fortunate fall" into contemporary Protestant and Catholic thought, and backward to the Fathers of the Church. In the light of man's redemption by the sacrifice of Christ, the divine justice is fully cleared, and—as Professor Lovejoy points out—bold spirits even in the Middle Ages had hinted at the question whether the final outcome of Adam's sin did not in some sense justify even the sinner as well as the Creator. In the twelfth book of *Paradise Lost*, after Adam has seen all future history unfolded in a vision that stretches beyond Christ's incarnation to the final redemption of the just, Milton makes him ready to more than justify God, when he says to Michael,

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!  
That all this good of evil shall produce,  
And evil turn to good.

II2. To this assertion of the divine goodness—once its full historical significance is understood—the modern conscience offers no objection, but it stubbornly refuses to accept Milton's conception of God as a deity whose character is—or seems—rather humanly arbitrary. He does not try to make the prob-

<sup>25</sup> *Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions* by R. South (London, 1840) III, 377.

<sup>26</sup> A. O. Lovejoy, "Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall," *ELH* IV (1937), 161-79.

lem easier for us by eluding it conventionally, as Herrick did:

God can't be wrathful, but we may conclude  
Wrathful he may be by similitude.  
God's wrathful said to be when He doth do  
That without wrath which wrath doth force us to.

That is Calvin's solution. Quoting James i, 17, to justify the biblical application of "similitudes" of "wrath, anger, and indignation" to God, Calvin said<sup>27</sup> that, "because we comprehend not the judgements of God, but by these words of anger, wrath, and indignation: for this cause the Scripture speaketh after this manner." Modern thought is intolerant of the part played by the wrath of God in the Bible. For example, Aldous Huxley calls the Old Testament a "remarkable compendium of Bronze-Age literature," in which "God is personal to the point of being almost subhuman."<sup>28</sup> Milton had no such difficulty with the anthropomorphism of the Bible. When Genesis vi, 6, says that "it repented Jehovah that he had made man," Milton tells us to "believe that it did repent him, only taking care to remember that what is called repentance when applied to God, does not arise from inadvertency, as in men." So keen was his sense of divine interest and intervention in human affairs that it seemed to him right that God should "habitually assign to himself the members and form of man," and wrong that, "if it be his will that we should thus think of him, . . . our imagination [should] wander into some other conception." His final word in the chapter "Of God," however, is reverently to pronounce God "incomprehensible." So, perhaps, he satisfies Professor Whitehead and also Mr. Huxley in their view that the civilized world concurs in disbelieving in "direct vision of a personal God."<sup>29</sup>

113. Though God might be incomprehensible, Milton did not hesitate to assign him five other attributes, which—reflexly—

<sup>27</sup> *Sermons upon the X Commandments*. Translated by J. Harmar, London, 1581, f. 16v.

<sup>28</sup> *Ends and Means*, pp. 276-9.

<sup>29</sup> Whitehead's *Religion in the Making*, quoted by Huxley in *The Olive Tree*, p. 200.

are perhaps as good a key as any to Milton's own character. They are vitality, purity, graciousness, truth, and justice. The entire *Christian Doctrine* might be constructed without fundamental change around those five divine attributes. That is why the treatise deserves M. Saurat's praise as showing "character expressed in abstract thought in a way which is deeply illuminating of English character and of English thinking generally."<sup>30</sup> The most significant of the five is truth, which Milton says implies the inward consistency of the divine nature, or a quality upon which an ordinary believer, a theologian, a metaphysician, and perhaps even a natural scientist might rely. It implied definitely that Milton parted company with Calvin in making God's arbitrary will supreme in the universe. Rather, as Leibnitz was to do, Milton saw God's will as dependent on his intellect, yet not in a way to restrict His freedom, "for the most perfect freedom consists in being determined in one's actions by the most complete reasons."<sup>31</sup> That definition would have satisfied Milton both as applied to God and as applied to the state of perfection from which Adam fell. Though men had been blinded by the fall, they still possessed "that feeling, whether we term it conscience, or right reason, which even in the worst of characters is not altogether extinguished," and which Milton thought was one of the prime evidences of God's existence. His hesitation as to whether man's intellectual or moral faculties were primary is characteristic of him. Perhaps it explains why he followed the traditional teaching of the church that "it pleased God to bind man by the signature of laws, to observe those . . . natural lessons, without which . . . man could not live well and happily."<sup>32</sup> At the same time it explains why he regarded implicit or non-rational faith as nothing less than superstition and could never have fulfilled his own personal destiny without devoting years of his life to the writing of his *Christian Doctrine*.

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<sup>30</sup> Review of the C.E. of *Christian Doctrine*, R.E.S. XIV, 351.

<sup>31</sup> L. J. Russell in *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir H. J. C. Grierson*, p. 326.

<sup>32</sup> Taylor, *The Great Exemplar*, p. 14 of the Preface.

## A LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY AND IN THE NOTES

*Animadversions: Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defense against Smectymnuus.*

*C.E.: The Works of John Milton*, published by the Columbia University Press.

*C.D.: The Christian Doctrine.* References are to Bishop Sumner's translation of *De Doctrina Christiana*.

*C.G.: The Reason of Church Government Urg'd against Prelaty.*

*Divorce: The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.*

*D.N.B.: The Dictionary of National Biography.*

*ELH:ELH, A Journal of English Literary History.*

*H.L.Q.: Huntington Library Quarterly.*

*J.E.G.P.: The Journal of English and Germanic Philology.*

*Masson: The Life of John Milton; Narrated in connexion with the political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of his Time.*  
London, 1859-1897.

*M.L.N.: Modern Language Notes.*

*M.L.R.: Modern Language Review.*

*M.L.Q.: Modern Language Quarterly.*

*N.E.D.: New Oxford English Dictionary.*

*Of Reformation: Of Reformation in England and the Causes that hitherto have hindered it.*

*P.L.: Paradise Lost.*

*P.M.L.A.: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.*

*P.Q.: Philological Quarterly.*

*P.R.: Paradise Regained.*

*R.E.S.: Review of English Studies.*

*P.B.A.: Proceedings of the British Academy.*

*S.A.*: *Samson Agonistes*.

*S.D.*: *The Second Defense of the English People*. References are to the *Defensio Secunda* in C.E.

*S.P.*: *Studies in Philology*.

*S.R.*: *Sewanee Review*.

*Tenure*: *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*.

*U.T.Q.*: *University of Toronto Quarterly*.

*Way*: *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*.

Though designed primarily as a guide to collateral reading for students who are interested in the background and continuing influence of Milton's prose, this list of books tries to include all the outstanding contributions of the past century to the study of the subject in all its general aspects or to the interpretation of any of the works which are found in the present edition. Though the editor has not been able to find all the doctoral dissertations in the field, an effort has been made to include such unpublished material and to consult and describe it in as many cases as possible. For further bibliographical help the student should turn to the three standard works; E. N. S. Thompson's *John Milton: A Topical Bibliography* (New Haven, 1916); David H. Stevens' *Reference Guide to Milton from 1800 to the Present Day* (University of Chicago Press, 1930); and Harris Fletcher's *Contributions to a Milton Bibliography, 1800-1930* (Urbana, 1931). For more recent work the Annual Bibliographies of the Modern Humanities Research Association and the Bibliographies of the Recent Literature of the Renaissance in the April issues of *Studies in Philology* should be consulted.



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## SOME EARLY LIVES OF MILTON

### COLLECTIONS FOR THE LIFE OF MILTON

BY JOHN AUBREY, F.R.S.

Mr. John Milton

Was of an Oxfordshire family: his grandfather . . . [a Rom. Cath.] of Holten, in Oxfordshire, near Shotover. His father was brought up in the University of Oxon, at Christ Church, [his mother was a Bradshaw, Chpr. Milton (his brother, the Inner Temple) barrister], and his gr. father disinherited him because he kept not to the Catholic religion [He found a Bible, in English, in his chamber]; so thereupon he came to London, and became a scrivener (brought up by a friend of his, was not an apprentice), and got a plentiful estate by it, and left it off many years before he died. He was an ingenious man, delighted in music, composed many songs now in print, especially that of Oriana.

His son John was born in Bread Street, in London, at the Spread Eagle, which was his house (he had also in that street another house, the Rose, and other houses in other places). He was borne *Anno Domini* . . . the . . . day of . . . about . . . a clock in the . . . He went to school to old Mr. Gill, at Paul's school; went, at his own charge only, to Christ College in Cambr. [at fifteen], where he stayed eight years at least; then he travelled into France and Italy. At Geneva he contracted a great friendship with the learned Dr. Deodati, of Geneva (*vide* his poems). [Had Sir H. Wotton's commendatory letters]. He was acquainted with Sir Henry Wotton, who delighted in his company, Ambassador at Venice. He was several years [*qu.* How many? *Resp.* Two years] beyond

sea, and returned to England just upon the breaking out of the civil wars. He was Latin Secretary to the Parliament.

*Anno Domini* 1619 he was ten years old, as by his picture, and was then a poet. His school-master then was a Puritan, in Essex, who cut his hair short.

He married his first wife . . . Powell, of Fost-hill, in Oxon-shire. She went without her husband's consent to her mother in the King's quarters. [She went from him to her mother's at . . . the King's quarters, near Oxford . . . and wrote the triple chord, about Divorce.] She died *Anno Domini* . . .

*Anno Domini* . . . [sic] by whom he had 4 children. Hath two daughters living; Deborah was his amanuensis; he taught her Latin, and to read Greek (and Hebrew, *qu. erased,*) to him when he lost his eyesight, which was *Anno Domini* . . .

He was scarce so tall as I am [*Qu. quot* feet I am high? *Resp.* Of middle stature]. He had light brown [auburn] hair. His complexion exceeding fair [he was so fair that they called him the Lady of Christ College]. Oval face, his eye a dark gray. His widow has his picture drawn (very well and like) when a Cambridge scholar. She has his picture when a Cambridge scholar, which ought to be engraven; for the pictures before his books are not *at all* like him.

He married his 2d wife, Mistress Eliz. Minshull, *Anno* . . . (the year before the sickness), a gentle person, a peaceful and agreeable humor.

After he was blind, he wrote these following books, *viz.*

Paradise Lost,  
Paradise Regained,  
Grammar,  
Dictionary, imperfect.

He was a spare man.

[Different tell.] Two opinions do not well on the same bolster. She was a . . . royalist, and went to her mother near Oxford [the K's quarters]. I have so much charity for her that she might not wrong his bed, but what man (especially contemplative) would like to have a young wife environed [and stormed] by the sons of Mars, and those of the enemy party.

He lived in several places, e. g. Holborn near K's gate. He died in Bunhill opposite the Artillery-gardenwall.

His harmonical and ingenious soul did lodge in a beautiful and well-proportioned body.

*In toto nusquam corpore menda fuit.*

Ovid.

He had a very good memory; but I believe that his excellent method of thinking and disposing did much help his memory.

I heard that after he was blind, that he was writing, a [Latin] dictionary in the hands of Moses P.H. *Vidua affirmat*. She gave all his papers (among which this dictionary imperfect) to his nephew, that he brought up, a sister's son, . . . Philips, who lives near the Maypole in the Strand. She has a great many letters by her from learned men, his acquaintance, both of England, and beyond sea.

His eye-sight was decaying about 20 years before his death. (*Qu.* when quite [stark] blind?) His father read without spectacles at 84. His mother had very weak eyes, and used spectacles presently after she was thirty years old.

Of a very cheerful humor.

Seldom took any physic, only sometimes he took manna.

He was very healthy, and free from all diseases; only toward his later end, he was visited with the gout, spring and fall. He would be cheerful even in his gout-fits, and sing.

He died of the gout struck in, the 9th or 10th of November, 1674, as appears by his apothecary's book.

He lies buried in St. Giles, Cripplegate, [upper end of] chancel at the right hand. *Mdm.* his stone is now removed; for about 2 years since (now 1681) the two steps to the communion-table were raised. I guess Jo. Speed and he lie together.

*Qu.* His nephew, Mr. Edw. Philips, for a perfect catalogue of his writings. *Mdm.* he wrote a little tract of *Education*.

*Mdm.* Mr. Theodore Haak, R.S.S. hath translated half his *Paradise Lost* into High Dutch, in such blank verse, which is very well liked of by Germanus Fabricius, professor at Heidelberg, who sent to Mr. Haak a letter upon this translation.

*Incredible est quantum nos omnes affecerit gravitas styli, et copia lectissimorum verborum, et . . .* vide the letter.

He was an early riser, *sc.* at 4 o'clock *manè*, yea, after he lost his sight. He had a man read to him. The first thing he read was the Hebrew Bible, and that was at 4*h.* *manè*-4/2 *h.* +. Then he contemplated. At 7 his man came to him again, and then read to him and wrote till dinner; the writing was as much as the reading. His 2d daughter, Deborah, [married in Dublin to one Mr. Clarke (a mercer, sells silk); very like her father.] could read to him Latin, Ital. and French, and Greek. The other sister is Mary, more like her mother. After dinner he used to walk 3 to 4 hours at a time (he always had a garden where he lived): went to bed about 9. Temperate, rarely drank between meals. Extreme pleasant in his conversation, and at dinner, supper, &c. but satirical.

He pronounced the letter R very hard [*Litera canina*. A certain sign of a satirical wit. From Jo. Dryden].

He had a delicate, tuneable voice, and had good skill. His father instructed him. He had an organ in his house; he played on that most. His exercise was chiefly walking.

He was visited much by learned, more than he did desire.

He was mightily importuned to go into Fr. and Italy. Foreigners came much to see him, and much admired him, and offered to him great preferments to come over to them, and the only inducement of several foreigners that came over into England, was chiefly to see O. Protector, and Mr. J. Milton; and would see the *house and chamber* where *he* was born. He was much more admired abroad than at home.

His familiar learned acquaintance were Mr. Andrew Marvell, Mr. Skinner, Dr. Paget, M.D.

Mr. . . . Skinner, who was his disciple.

Jo. Dryden, Esq., Poet Laureate, who very much admires him, and went to him to have leave to put his *Paradise Lost* into a drama in rhyme. Mr. Milton received him civilly, and told him he would give him leave to tag his verses.

His widow assures me that Mr. Hobbs was not one of his acquaintance, that her husband did not like him at all, but he

would acknowledge him to be a man of great parts, and a learned man. Their interests and tenets were diametrically opposite—vide Mr. Hobbes *Behemoth*.

From his bro. Chr. Milton:—

When he went to school, when he was very young, he studied very hard, and sat up very late; commonly till 12 or one o'clock at night, and his father ordered the maid to sit up for him, and in those years (10) composed many copies of verses, which might well become a riper age. And was a very hard student in the university, and performed all his exercises there with very good applause. His 1st tutor there was Mr. Chapell, from whom receiving some unkindness [whipped him], he was afterwards (though it seemed opposite to the rules of the college), transferred to the tuition of one Mr. Tovell, who died parson of Lutterworth.

I have been told that the father composed a song of fourscore parts of the Landgrave of Hesse for which highness sent a medal of gold or a noble present. He died, about 1647, buried in Cripplegate ch. from his house in the Barbican.

Mr. Chr. Milton to see the date of his bro. birth.

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Of Reformation.             | } <i>Qu.</i> whether two |
| Against Prelatical Episcopacy. |                          |

books.

2. The Reason of Church Government.

3. A Defence of Smectymnuus.

4. The Doctrine and Discipline of  
Divorce.

5. Colasterion.

6. The Judgment of Martin Bucer.

7. Tetrachordon (of Divorce).

} All these in prosecution  
of the same  
subject.

Areopagitica, viz., for the Liberty of the Press.

Of Education.

Iconoclastes.

Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.

Defensio Populi Anglicani.

Defensio Secunda contra Morum. His Logic.

Defensio Tertia.

Of the Power of the Civil Magistrate in Ecclesiastical Affairs.

Against Hirelings (against Tithes).

Of a Commonwealth.

Against Dr. Griffith.

Of Toleration, Heresy, and Schism.

He went to travel about the year 1638, and was abroad about a year's space, chiefly in Italy: immediately after his return he took a lodging at Mr. Russell's, a tailor, in St. Bride's Church-yard, and took into his tuition his sister's two sons, Edw. and John Philips, the first 10, the other 9 years of age; and in a year's time made them capable of interpreting a Latin author at sight, &c. and within 3 years they went through the best of Latin and Greek poets: Lucretius and Manilius (and with him the use of the globes, and some rudiments of arithm. and geom.) of the Latins; Hesiod, Aratus, Dionysius Afer, Oppian, Apollonii *Argonautica*, and Quintus Calaber. Cato, Varro, and Columella *de Re Rustica* were the very first authors they learned.

As he was severe on one hand, so he was most familiar and free in his conversation to those to whom most sour in his way of education. N. B. He made his nephews songsters, and sing from the time they were with him.

John Milton was born the 9th of December, 1608, *die Veneris*, half an hour after 6 in the morning.

From Mr. E. Philips:—All the time of writing his *Paradise Lost*, his vein began at the autumnal equinoctial, and ceased at the vernal, or thereabouts (I believe about May), and this was 4 or 5 years of his doing it. He began about 2 years before the K. came in, and finished about 3 years after the K.'s restoration.

*Qu.* Mr. J. Playford *pro* Wilby's Set of Orianas.

In the [4th] book of *Paradise Lost* there are about 6 verses of Satan's exclamation to the sun, which Mr. E. Philips remembers

about 15 or 16 years before ever his Poem was thought of; which verses were intended for the beginning of a tragedy, which he had designed, but was diverted from it by other business.

Whatever he wrote against monarchy was out of no animosity to the King's person, or out of any faction or interest, but out of a pure zeal to the liberty of mankind, which he thought would be greater under a free state than under a monarchical government. His being so conversant in Livy and the Roman authors, and the greatness he saw done by the Roman commonwealth, and the virtue of their great commanders induced him to.

His first wife (Mrs. Powell, a royalist) was brought up and lived where there was a great deal of company and merriment, dancing, &c. And when she came to live with her husband at Mr. Russell's, in St. Bride's ch. yard, she found it very solitary; no company came to her, oftentimes heard his nephews beaten and cry. This life was irksome to her, and so she went to her parents at Foste-hill. He sent for her (after some time), and I think his servant was evilly entreated, but as for wronging his bed, I never heard the least suspicions, nor had he of that any jealousy.

From Mr. Abr. Hill:—*Memorand.* His sharp writing against Alexander More, of Holland, upon a mistake notwithstanding he had given him by the ambassador [*Qu.* the ambassador's name of Mr. Hill? *Resp.* Newport, the Dutch ambassador] all satisfaction to the contrary: *viz.* that the book called "*Clamor*" was writ by Peter du Moulin. Well, that was all one; he having writ it, it should go into the world; one of them was as bad as the other.

His sight began to fail him at first upon his writing against Salmasius, and before 'twas fully completed, one eye absolutely failed. Upon the writing of other books after that, his other eye decayed.

Write his name in red letters on his pictures with his widow to preserve.

*THE LIFE OF MILTON*

BY EDWARD PHILLIPS

Of all the several parts of history, that which sets forth the lives, and commemorates the most remarkable actions, sayings, or writings of famous and illustrious persons, whether in war or peace, whether many together, or any one in particular, as it is not the least useful in itself, so it is in highest vogue and esteem among the studious and reading part of mankind.

The most eminent in this way of history were, among the ancients, Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius, of the Greeks; the first wrote the lives, for the most part, of the most renowned heroes and warriors of the Greeks and Romans; the other, the lives of the ancient Greek philosophers. And Cornelius Nepos (or as some will have it Æmilius Probus) of the Latins, who wrote the lives of the most illustrious Greek and Roman generals.

Among the moderns, Machiavelli, a noble Florentine, who elegantly wrote the life of Castruccio Castracani, Lord of Lucca. And of our nation, Sir Fulke Greville, who wrote the life of his most intimate friend, Sir Philip Sidney; Mr. Thomas Stanley of Cumberlo-Green, who made a most elaborate improvement to theforesaid Laertius, by adding to what he found in him, what by diligent search and enquiry he collected from other authors of best authority; [and] Isaac Walton, who wrote the lives of Sir Henry Wotton, Dr. Donne, and for his divine poems, the admired Mr. George Herbert. Lastly, not to mention several other biographers of considerable note, the great Gassendus of France, the worthy celebrator of two no less worthy subjects of his impartial pen; *viz.* the noble philosopher Epicurus, and the most politely learned virtuoso of his age, his countryman, Monsieur Peiresk.

And pity it is the person whose memory we have here undertaken to perpetuate by recounting the most memorable transactions of his life (though his works sufficiently recommend him to the world), finds not a well-informed pen able to set him forth, equal with the best of those here mentioned; for doubt-



less, had his fame been as much spread through Europe in Thuanus's time, as now it is and hath been for several years, he had justly merited from that great historian, an eulogy not inferior to the highest by him given to all the learned and ingenious that lived within the compass of his history. For we may safely and justly affirm, that take him in all respects, for acumen of wit, quickness of apprehension, sagacity of judgment, depth of argument, and elegance of style, as well in Latin as English, as well in verse as prose, he is scarce to be paralleled by any the best of writers our nation hath in any age brought forth.

He was born in London, in a house in Breadstreet, the lease whereof, as I take it, but for certain it was a house in Breadstreet, became in time part of his estate, in the year of our Lord 1606. His father John Milton, an honest, worthy, and substantial citizen of London, by profession a scrivener; to which he voluntarily betook himself by the advice and assistance of an intimate friend of his eminent in that calling, upon his being cast out by his father, a bigoted Roman Catholic, for embracing, when young, the protestant faith, and abjuring the popish tenets. For he is said to have been descended of an ancient family of the Miltons, of Milton near Abingdon in Oxfordshire; where they had been a long time seated, as appears by the monuments still to be seen in Milton church; till one of the family having taken the wrong side, in the contest between the Houses of York and Lancaster, was sequestered of all his estate, but what he held by his wife. However, certain it is that this vocation he followed for many years, at his said house in Breadstreet, with success suitable to his industry and prudent conduct of his affairs. Yet he did not so far quit his own generous and ingenious inclinations as to make himself wholly a slave to the world; for he sometimes found vacant hours to the study (which he made his recreation) of the noble science of music, in which he advanced to that perfection that as I have been told, and as I take it by our author himself, he composed an *In Nomine* of forty parts; for which he was rewarded with a gold medal and chain by a Polish prince, to whom he presented it. However, this is a truth not to be denied, that for several songs

of his composition after the way of these times (three or four of which are still to be seen in Old Wilby's set of *Airs*, besides some compositions of his in Ravenscroft's *Psalms*) he gained the reputation of a considerable master in this most charming of all the liberal sciences. Yet all this while he managed his grand affair of this world with such prudence and diligence that by the assistance of divine Providence favoring his honest endeavors, he gained a competent estate, whereby he was enabled to make a handsome provision both for the education and maintenance of his children; for three he had, and no more, all by one wife, Sarah, of the family of the Castons, derived originally from Wales, a woman of incomparable virtue and goodness: John the eldest, the subject of our present work, Christopher, and an only daughter Ann.

Christopher, being principally designed for the study of the common law of England, was entered young a student of the Inner Temple, of which house he lived to be an ancient benchler, and keeping close to that study and profession all his life time, except in the time of the civil wars of England; when being a great favorer and asserter of the King's cause, and obnoxious to the Parliament's side, by acting to his utmost power against them, so long as he kept his station at Reading; and after that town was taken by the Parliament forces, being forced to quit his house there, he steered his course according to the motion of the King's army. But when the war was ended with victory and success to the Parliament party by the valor of General Fairfax and the craft and conduct of Cromwell, and his composition made by the help of his brother's interest with the then prevailing power, he betook himself again to his former study and profession, following chamber-practice every term; yet came to no advancement in the world in a long time, except some small employ in the town of Ipswich, where (and near it) he lived all the latter time of his life; for he was a person of a modest, quiet temper, preferring justice and virtue before all worldly pleasure or grandeur. But in the beginning of the reign of King James the II., for his known integrity and ability in the law, he was by some persons of quality recommended

to the King, and at a call of sergeants received the coif, and the same day was sworn one of the barons of the Exchequer, and soon after made one of the judges of the Common Pleas. But his years and indisposition not well brooking the fatigue of public employment, he continued not long in either of these stations; but having his *quietus est*, retired to a country life, his study and devotion.

Ann, the only daughter of the said John Milton, the elder, had a considerable dowry given her by her father in marriage with Edward Philips, the son of Edward Philips of Shrewsbury, who, coming up young to town, was bred up in the crown-office in Chancery, and at length came to be secondary of the office under old Mr. Bembo. By him she had, besides other children that died infants, two sons yet surviving, of whom more hereafter; and by a second husband, Mr. Thomas Agar (who, upon the death of his intimate friend Mr. Philips, worthily succeeded in the place, which, except some time of exclusion before and during the Interregnum, he held for many years, and left it to Mr. Thomas Milton, the son of the aforementioned Sir Christopher, who at this day executes it with great reputation and ability), two daughters, Mary who died very young, and Ann yet surviving.

But to hasten back to our matter in hand. John, our author, who was destined to be the ornament and glory of his country, was sent, together with his brother, to Paul's school, whereof Dr. Gill the elder was then chief master; where he was entered into the first rudiments of learning, and advanced therein with that admirable success, not more by the discipline of the school and good instructions of his masters (for that he had another master, possibly at his father's house, appears by the *Fourth Elegy* of his Latin poems written in his 18th year, to Thomas Young, pastor of the English Company of Merchants at Hamburg, wherein he owns and styles him his master), than by his own happy genius, prompt wit and apprehension, and insuperable industry: for he generally sat up half the night, as well in voluntary improvements of his own choice, as the exact perfecting of his school exercises. So that at the age of 15 he was full

ripe for academic learning, and accordingly was sent to the University of Cambridge; where in Christ's College under the tuition of a very eminent learned man, whose name I cannot call to mind, he studied seven years and took his degree of Master of Arts; and for the extraordinary wit and reading he had shown in his performances to attain his degree (some whereof, spoken at a *Vacation Exercise* in his 19th year of age, are to be yet seen in his *Miscellaneous Poems*), he was loved and admired by the whole university, particularly by the fellows and most ingenious persons of his house. Among the rest there was a young gentleman, one Mr. King, with whom, for his great learning and parts, he had contracted a particular friendship and intimacy; whose death (for he was drowned on the Irish seas in his passage from Chester to Ireland) he bewails in that most excellent monody in his forementioned poems, entitled *Lycidas*. Never was the loss of friend so elegantly lamented; and among the rest of his *Juvenile Poems*, some he wrote at the age of 15, which contain a poetical genius scarce to be paralleled by any English writer.

Soon after he had taken his Master's degree, he thought fit to leave the university: not upon any disgust or discontent for want of preferment, as some ill-willers have reported; nor upon any cause whatsoever forced to fly, as his detractors maliciously feign; but from which aspersion he sufficiently clears himself in his *Second Answer to Alexander Morus*, the author of a book called, *Clamor Regii Sanguinis ad Coelum*, the chief of his calumniators; in which he plainly makes it out that after his leaving the university, to the no small trouble of his fellow-collegiates, who in general regretted his absence, he for the space of five years lived for the most part with his father and mother at their house at Horton near Colebrook in Berkshire; whither his father, having got an estate to his content and left off all business, was retired from the cares and fatigues of the world.

After the said term of five years, his mother then dying, he was willing to add to his acquired learning the observation of foreign customs, manners, and institutions; and thereupon took a resolution to travel, more especially designing for Italy; and

accordingly, with his father's consent and assistance, he put himself into an equipage suitable to such a design; and so, intending to go by the way of France, he set out for Paris, accompanied only with one man, who attended him through all his travels; for his prudence was his guide, and his learning his introduction and presentation to persons of most eminent quality. However, he had also a most civil and obliging letter of direction and advice from Sir Henry Wotton, then Provost of Eton, and formerly resident Ambassador from King James the First to the state of Venice; which letter is to be seen in the first edition of his *Miscellaneous Poems*.

At Paris, being recommended by the said Sir Henry and other persons of quality, he went first to wait upon my Lord Scudamore, then Ambassador in France from King Charles the First. My Lord received him with wonderful civility; and understanding he had a desire to make a visit to the great Hugo Grotius, he sent several of his attendants to wait upon him and to present him in his name to that renowned doctor and statesman, who was at that time Ambassador from Christina, Queen of Sweden, to the French king. Grotius took the visit kindly, and gave him entertainment suitable to his worth and the high commendations he had heard of him. After a few days, not intending to make the usual tour of France, he took his leave of my Lord, who at his departure from Paris, gave him letters to the English merchants residing in any part through which he was to travel, in which they were requested to show him all the kindness and do him all the good offices that lay in their power.

From Paris he hastened on his journey to Nice, where he took shipping, and in a short space arrived at Genoa; from whence he went to Leghorn, thence to Pisa, and so to Florence. In this city he met with many charming objects, which invited him to stay a longer time than he intended; the pleasant situation of the place, the nobleness of the structures, the exact humanity and civility of the inhabitants, the more polite and refined sort of language there than elsewhere. During the time of his stay here, which was about two months, he visited

all the private academies of the city, which are places established for the improvement of wit and learning, and maintained a correspondence and perpetual friendship among gentlemen fitly qualified for such an institution; and such sort of academies there are in all or most of the most noted cities in Italy. Visiting these places he was soon taken notice of by the most learned and ingenious of the nobility and the grand wits of Florence, who caressed him with all the honors and civilities imaginable; particularly Jacobo Gaddi, Carlo Dati, Antonio Francini, Frescobaldo, Cultellino, Bonmatthei and Clementillo: whereof Gaddi hath a large, elegant Italian canzonet in his praise, [and] Dati, a Latin epistle, both printed before his Latin poems, together with a Latin distich of the Marquis of Villa, and another of Selvaggi, and a Latin tetrastich of Giovanni Salsilli, a Roman.

From Florence he took his journey to Siena, from thence to Rome, where he was detained much about the same time he had been at Florence; as well by his desire of seeing all the rarities and antiquities of that most glorious and renowned city, as by the conversation of Lucas Holstenius and other learned and ingenious men, who highly valued his acquaintance and treated him with all possible respect.

From Rome he travelled to Naples, where he was introduced by a certain hermit who accompanied him in his journey from Rome thither, into the knowledge of Giovanni Baptista Manso, Marquis of Villa, a Neapolitan by birth, a person of high nobility, virtue, and honor, to whom the famous Italian poet, Torquato Tasso, wrote his treatise *De Amicitia*; and moreover mentions him with great honor in that illustrious poem of his, entitled *Gierusalemme Liberata*. This noble marquis received him with extraordinary respect and civility, and went with him himself to give him a sight of all that was of note and remark in the city, particularly the viceroy's palace, and was often in person to visit him at his lodging. Moreover, this noble marquis honored him so far, as to make a Latin distich in his praise, as hath been already mentioned; which being no less pithy than short, though already in print, it will not be unworth the while here to repeat.

*"Ut mens, forma, decor, facies, [mos,] si pietas sic  
Non Anglus, verum hercle Angelus ipse foret."*

In return of this honor, and in gratitude for the many favors and civilities received of him, he presented him at his departure with a large Latin eclogue, entitled *Mansus*, afterwards published among his *Latin Poems*. The marquis at his taking leave of him, gave him this compliment: that he would have done him many more offices of kindness and civility, but was therefore rendered incapable, in regard he had been over-liberal in his speech against the religion of the country.

He had entertained some thoughts of passing over into Sicily and Greece, but was diverted by the news he received from England that affairs there were tending toward a civil war; thinking it a thing unworthy in him to be taking his pleasure in foreign parts while his countrymen at home were fighting for their liberty: but first resolved to see Rome once more; and though the merchants gave him a caution that the Jesuits were hatching designs against him in case he should return thither, by reason of the freedom he took in all his discourses of religion; nevertheless he ventured to prosecute his resolution, and to Rome the second time he went; determining with himself not industriously to begin to fall into any discourse about religion, but, being asked, not to deny or endeavor to conceal his own sentiments. Two months he stayed at Rome, and in all that time never flinched, but was ready to defend the orthodox faith against all opposers; and so well he succeeded therein, that, good Providence guarding him, he went safe from Rome back to Florence, where his return to his friends of that city was welcomed with as much joy and affection as had it been to his friends and relations in his own country, he could not have come a more joyful and welcome guest.

Here, having stayed as long as at his first coming, excepting an excursion of a few days to Lucca, crossing the Apennine and passing through Bononia and Ferrara, he arrived at Venice; where when he had spent a month's time in viewing of that stately city and shipped up a parcel of curious and rare books

which he had picked up in his travels (particularly a chest or two of choice music-books of the best masters flourishing about that time in Italy, namely, Luca Marenzo, Monte Verde, Horatio Vecchi, Cifa, the Prince of Venosa, and several others), he took his course through Verona, Milan, and the Poenine Alps, and so by the lake Lemán to Geneva, where he stayed for some time, and had daily converse with the most learned Giovanni Deodati, theology professor in that city; and so returning through France, by the same way he had passed it going to Italy, he, after a peregrination of one complete year and about three months, arrived safe in England about the time of the King's making his second expedition against the Scots.

Soon after his return and visits paid to his father and other friends, he took him a lodging in St. Bride's Churchyard, at the house of one Russel, a tailor, where he first undertook the education and instruction of his sister's two sons, the younger whereof had been wholly committed to his charge and care.

And here by the way, I judge it not impertinent to mention the many authors both of the Latin and Greek, which through his excellent judgment and way of teaching, far above the pedantry of common public schools (where such authors are scarce ever heard of), were run over within no greater compass of time, than from ten to fifteen or sixteen years of age. Of the Latin, the four grand authors *De Re Rustica*, Cato, Varro, Columella and Palladius; Cornelius Celsus, an ancient physician of the Romans; a great part of Pliny's *Natural History*; Vitruvius his *Architecture*; Frontinus his *Stratagems*; with the two egregious poets, Lucretius and Manilius. Of the Greek, Hesiod, a poet equal with Homer; Aratus his *Phaenomena*, and *Dio-semeia*; Dionysius Afer *De Situ Orbis*; Oppian's *Cynegetics* and *Halieutics*; Quintus Calaber his *Poem of the Trojan War* continued from Homer; Apollonius Rhodius his *Argonautics*; and in prose, Plutarch's *Placita Philosophorum*, and *Περὶ Παιδων Ἀγωγίας* [*sic*]; Geminus's *Astronomy*; Xenophon's *Cyri Institutio*, and *Anabasis*; Ælian's *Tactics*; and Polyænus his *Warlike Stratagems*. Thus by teaching he in some measure in-



creased his own knowledge, having the reading of all these authors as it were by proxy; and all this might possibly have conduced to the preserving of his eyesight, had he not moreover been perpetually busied in his own laborious undertakings of the book and pen.

Nor did the time thus studiously employed in conquering the Greek and Latin tongues, hinder the attaining to the chief oriental languages, *viz.*, the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac, so far as to go through the *Pentateuch*, or Five Books of Moses in Hebrew, to make a good entrance into the *Targum*, or Chaldee Paraphrase, and to understand several chapters of St. Matthew in the Syriac Testament: besides an introduction into several arts and sciences, by reading Urstisius his *Arithmetic*, Riff's *Geometry*, Petiscus his *Trigonometry*, Johannes de Sacro Bosco *De Sphæra*; and into the Italian and French tongues, by reading in Italian Giovan Villani's *History of the Transactions between several petty States of Italy*; and in French a great part of Pierre Davity, the famous geographer of France in his time.

The Sunday's work was, for the most part, the reading each day a chapter of the Greek Testament, and hearing his learned exposition upon the same (and how this savored of atheism in him, I leave to the courteous backbiter to judge). The next work after this was the writing from his own dictation, some part, from time to time, of a tractate which he thought fit to collect from the ablest of divines who had written of that subject: Amesius, Wollebius, &c., *viz.* *A Perfect System of Divinity*, of which more hereafter.

Now persons so far manuducted into the highest paths of literature both divine and human, had they received his documents with the same acuteness of wit and apprehension, the same industry, alacrity, and thirst after knowledge, as the instructor was indued with, what prodigies of wit and learning might they have proved! The scholars might in some degree have come near to the equalling of the master, or at least have in some sort made good what he seems to predict in the close of an elegy he made in the seventeenth year of his age, upon

the death of one of his sister's children (a daughter), who died in her infancy:

"Then thou, the mother of so sweet a child,  
Her false, imagin'd loss cease to lament,  
And wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild:  
This if thou do, he will an offspring give,  
That till the world's last end shall make thy name to live."

But to return to the thread of our discourse. He made no long stay in his lodgings in St. Bride's Church-yard; necessity of having a place to dispose his books in, and other goods fit for the furnishing of a good, handsome house, hastening him to take one; and, accordingly, a pretty garden-house he took in Aldersgate-street, at the end of an entry and therefore the fitter for his turn by the reason of the privacy; besides that there are few streets in London more free from noise than that. Here first it was that his academic erudition was put in practice, and vigorously proceeded, he himself giving an example to those under him (for it was not long after his taking this house, ere his elder nephew was put to board with him also) of hard study and spare diet; only this advantage he had, that once in three weeks or a month, he would drop into the society of some young sparks of his acquaintance, the chief whereof were Mr. Alphry and Mr. Miller, two gentlemen of Gray's Inn, the beaux of those times, but nothing near so bad as those now-a-days; with these gentlemen he would so far make bold with his body as now and then to keep a gawdy-day.

In this house he continued several years, in the one or two first whereof he set out several treatises, *viz.*, that *Of Reformation*; that *Against Prelatical Episcopacy*; *The Reason of Church-Government*; *The Defence of Smectymnuus*, at least the greatest part of them, but as I take it, all; and some time after, one sheet *Of Education* which he dedicated to Mr. Samuel Hartlib, he that wrote so much of husbandry (this sheet is printed at the end of the second edition of his *Poems*), and lastly *Areopagitica*.

During the time also of his continuance in this house, there fell out several occasions of the increasing of his family. His father, who till the taking of Reading by the Earl of Essex his forces, had lived with his other son at his house there, was upon that son's dissettlement necessitated to betake himself to this his eldest son, with whom he lived for some years, even to his dying day. In the next place he had an addition of some scholars; to which may be added, his entering into matrimony; but he had his wife's company so small a time, that he may well be said to have become a single man again soon after.

About Whitsuntide it was, or a little after, that he took a journey into the country; no body about him certainly knowing the reason, or that it was any more than a journey of recreation; after a month's stay, home he returns a married man, that went out a bachelor; his wife being Mary, the eldest daughter of Mr. Richard Powell, then a justice of peace, of Forresthill, near Shotover in Oxfordshire; some few of her nearest relations accompanying the bride to her new habitation; which by reason the father nor any body else were yet come, was able to receive them; where the feasting held for some days in celebration of the nuptials and for entertainment of the bride's friends. At length they took their leave and returning to Foresthill left the sister behind, probably not much to her satisfaction as appeared by the sequel. By that time she had for a month or thereabout led a philosophical life (after having been used to a great house, and much company and joviality), her friends, possibly incited by her own desire, made earnest suit by letter, to have her company the remaining part of the summer, which was granted, on condition of her return at the time appointed, Michaelmas, or thereabout. In the meantime came his father, and some of the forementioned disciples.

And now the studies went on with so much the more vigor, as there were more hands and heads employed; the old gentleman living wholly retired to his rest and devotion, without the least trouble imaginable. Our author, now as it were a single man again, made it his chief diversion now and then in an evening, to visit the lady Margaret Lee, daughter to the

——— Lee, Earl of Marlborough, Lord High Treasurer of England, and President of the Privy Council to King James the First. This lady being a woman of great wit and ingenuity, had a particular honor for him and took much delight in his company, as likewise her husband Captain Hobson, a very accomplished gentleman; and what esteem he at the same time had for her, appears by a sonnet he made in praise of her, to be seen among his other *Sonnets* in his extant *Poems*.

Michaelmas being come, and no news of his wife's return, he sent for her by letter; and receiving no answer, sent several other letters, which were also unanswered; so that at last he dispatched down a foot messenger with a letter, desiring her return. But the messenger came back not only without an answer, at least a satisfactory one, but to the best of my remembrance, reported that he was dismissed with some sort of contempt. This proceeding in all probability was grounded upon no other cause but this, namely, that the family being generally addicted to the cavalier party, as they called it, and some of them possibly engaged in the King's service, who by this time had his headquarters at Oxford, and was in some prospect of success, they began to repent them of having matched the eldest daughter of the family to a person so contrary to them in opinion; and thought it would be a blot in their escutcheon, whenever that court should come to flourish again.

However, it so incensed our author that he thought it would be dishonorable ever to receive her again, after such a repulse; so that he forthwith prepared to fortify himself with arguments for such a resolution, and accordingly wrote two treatises, by which he undertook to maintain, that it was against reason, and the enjoinder of it not provable by Scripture, for any married couple disagreeable in humor and temper, or having an aversion to each other, to be forced to live yoked together all their days. The first was his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, of which there was printed a second edition with some additions. The other in prosecution of the first, was styled *Tetrachordon*. Then the better to confirm his own opinion by the attestation of others, he set out a piece called *The Judgment of Martin*

*Bucer*, a protestant minister, being a translation out of that reverend divine, of some part of his works exactly agreeing with him in sentiment. Lastly, he wrote in answer to a pragmatistical clerk, who would needs give himself the honor of writing against so great a man, his *Colasterion*, or *Rod of Correction for a Saucy Impertinent*.

Not very long after the setting forth of these treatises, having application made to him by several gentlemen of his acquaintance for the education of their sons, as understanding haply the progress he had infixed by his first undertakings of that nature, he laid out for a larger house, and soon found it out.

But in the interim before he removed, there fell out a passage, which though it altered not the whole course he was going to steer, yet it put a stop or rather an end to a grand affair, which was more than probably thought to be then in agitation; it was indeed a design of marrying one of Dr. Davis's daughters, a very handsome and witty gentlewoman, but averse, as it is said, to this motion. However, the intelligence hereof, and the then declining state of the King's cause, and consequently of the circumstances of Justice Powell's family, caused them to set all engines on work to restore the late married woman to the station wherein they a little before had planted her. At last this device was pitched upon. There dwelt in the lane of St. Martin's-le-Grand, which was hard by, a relation of our author's, one Blackborough, whom it was known he often visited, and upon this occasion the visits were the more narrowly observed, and possibly there might be a combination between both parties; the friends on both sides concentrating in the same action, though on different behalfs. One time above the rest, he making his usual visit, the wife was ready in another room, and on a sudden he was surprised to see one whom he thought to have never seen more, making submission and begging pardon on her knees before him. He might probably at first make some show of aversion and rejection; but partly his own generous nature, more inclinable to reconciliation than to perseverance in anger and revenge, and partly the strong intercession of

friends on both sides, soon brought him to an act of oblivion and a firm league of peace for the future; and it was at length concluded that she should remain at a friend's house till such time as he was settled in his new house at Barbican, and all things for her reception in order; the place agreed on for her present abode was the widow Webber's house in St. Clement's Church-yard, whose second daughter had been married to the other brother many years before. The first fruits of her return to her husband was a brave girl, born within a year after; though, whether by ill constitution or want of care, she grew more and more decrepit.

But it was not only by children that she increased the number of the family; for in no very long time after her coming, she had a great resort of her kindred with her in the house, *viz.* her father and mother, and several of her brothers and sisters, which were in all pretty numerous; who upon his father's sickening and dying soon after, went away.

And now the house looked again like a house of the Muses only, though the accession of scholars was not great. Possibly his proceeding thus far in the education of youth may have been the occasion of some of his adversaries calling him pedagogue and schoolmaster; whereas it is well known he never set up for a public school to teach all the young fry of the parish, but only was willing to impart his learning and knowledge to relations, and the sons of some gentlemen that were his intimate friends; besides, that neither his converse, nor his writings, nor his manner of teaching ever savored in the least anything of pedantry; and probably he might have some prospect of putting in practice his academical institution, according to the model laid down in his sheet *Of Education*. The progress of which design was afterwards diverted by a series of alteration in the affairs of state; for I am much mistaken if there were not about this time a design in agitation of making him adjutant-general in Sir William Waller's army. But the new modeling of the army soon following proved an obstruction to that design; and Sir William, his commission being laid down, began, as the common saying is, to turn *cat in pan*.

It was not long after the march of Fairfax and Cromwell through the city of London with the whole army, to quell the insurrections Brown and Massey, now malcontents also, were endeavoring to raise in the city against the army's proceedings, ere he left his great house in Barbican, and betook himself to a smaller in High Holburn, among those that open backward into Lincoln's Inn Fields. Here he lived a private and quiet life, still prosecuting his studies and curious search into knowledge, the grand affair perpetually of his life; till such time as, the war being now at an end, with complete victory to the Parliament's side, as the Parliament then stood purged of all its dissenting members, and the King after some treaties with the army *re infecta*, brought to his trial; the form of government being now changed into a free state, he was hereupon obliged to write a treatise, called *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*.

After which his thoughts were bent upon retiring again to his own private studies, and falling upon such subjects as his proper genius prompted him to write of, among which was the history of our own nation from the beginning till the Norman Conquest, wherein he had made some progress. When (for this his last treatise, reviving the fame of other things he had formerly published) being more and more taken notice of for his excellency of style, and depth of judgment, he was courted into the service of this new commonwealth and at last prevailed with (for he never hunted after preferment, nor affected the tintamar and hurry of public business) to take upon him the office of Latin secretary to the Council of State, for all their letters to foreign princes and states; for they stuck to this noble and generous resolution, not to write to any, or to receive answers from them, but in a language most proper to maintain a correspondence among the learned of all nations in this part of the world; scorning to carry on their affairs in the wheedling, lispng jargon of the cringing French, especially having a minister of state able to cope with the ablest any prince or state could employ, for the Latin tongue. And so well he acquitted himself in this station that he gained from

abroad both reputation to himself and credit to the state that employed him.

And it was well the business of his office came not very fast upon him, for he was scarce well warm in his secretaryship before other work flowed in upon him, which took him up for some considerable time. In the first place there came out a book said to have been written by the king, and finished a little before his death, entitled *εἰκὼν βασιλική*, that is, *The Royal Image*; a book highly cried up for its smooth style, and pathetic-composure; wherefore to obviate the impression it was like to make among the many, he was obliged to write an answer, which he entitled *εἰκονοκλάστης* or *Image-Breaker*.

And upon the heels of that, out comes in public the great kill-cow of Christendom, with his *Defensio Regis contra Populum Anglicanum*; a man so famous and cried up for his Plinian Exercitations and other pieces of reputed learning, that there could no where have been found a champion that durst lift up the pen against so formidable an adversary, had not our little English David had the courage to undertake this great French Goliath, to whom he gave such a hit in the forehead, that he presently staggered, and soon after fell. For immediately upon the coming out of the answer, entitled, *Defensio Populi Anglicani contra Claudium Anonymum*, &c. he that till then had been chief minister and superintendent in the court of the learned Christina, Queen of Sweden, dwindled in esteem to that degree that he at last vouchsafed to speak to the meanest servant. In short, he was dismissed with so cold and slighting an adieu, that after a faint dying reply, he was glad to have recourse to death, the remedy of evils and ender of controversies.

And now I presume our author had some breathing space, but it was not long. For though Salmasius was departed, he left some stings behind; new enemies started up, barkers, though no great biters. Who the first asserter of Salmasius his cause was, is not certainly known but variously conjectured at, some supposing it to be one Janus, a lawyer of Gray's Inn, some Dr. Bramhal, made by King Charles the Second, after



his restoration, Archbishop of Armagh in Ireland; but whoever the author was, the book was thought fit to be taken into correction; and our author not thinking it worth his own undertaking, to the disturbing the progress of whatever more chosen work he had then in hands, committed this task to the youngest of his nephews; but with such exact emendations before it went to the press that it might have very well passed for his, but that he was willing the person that took the pains to prepare it for his examination and polishment should have the name and credit of being the author; so that it came forth under this title, *Joannis Philippi Angli Defensio pro Populo Anglicano contra, &c.*

During the writing and publishing of this book, he lodged at one Thomson's next door to the Bull-head tavern at Charing-Cross, opening into the Spring-Garden; which seems to have been only a lodging taken till his designed apartment in Scotland-Yard was prepared for him. For hither he soon removed from the aforesaid place; and here his third child, a son, was born, which through the ill usage, or bad constitution, of an ill-chosen nurse, died an infant.

From this apartment, whether he thought it not healthy, or otherwise convenient for his use, or whatever else was the reason, he soon after took a pretty garden-house in Petty-France in Westminster, next door to the Lord Scudamore's, and opening into St. James's Park. Here he remained no less than eight years, namely, from the year 1652, till within a few weeks of King Charles the Second's restoration.

In this house his first wife dying in childbed, he married a second, who after a year's time died in childbed also. This his second marriage was about two or three years after his being wholly deprived of sight, which was just going about the time of his answering Salmasius; whereupon his adversaries gladly take occasion of imputing his blindness as a judgment upon him for his answering the King's book, &c. whereas it is most certainly known that his sight, what with his continual study, his being subject to the headache, and his perpetual tampering with physic to preserve it, had been decaying for above a dozen

years before, and the sight of one for a long time clearly lost. Here he wrote, by his amanuensis, his two *Answers to Alexander More*, who upon the last answer quitted the field.

So that being now quiet from state adversaries and public contests, he had leisure again for his own studies and private designs; which were his aforesaid *History of England*, and a new *Thesaurus Linguae Latinæ*, according to the manner of Stephanus, a work he had been long since collecting from his own reading, and still went on with it at times, even very near to his dying day; but the papers after his death were so discomposed and deficient that it could not be made fit for the press; however, what there was of it was made use of for another dictionary.

But the height of his noble fancy and invention began now to be seriously and mainly employed in a subject worthy of such a Muse, *viz.* a heroic poem, entitled *Paradise Lost*; the noblest in the general esteem of learned and judicious persons of any yet written by any either ancient or modern. This subject was first designed a tragedy, and in the fourth book of the poem there are six verses, which several years before the poem was begun, were shown to me and some others, as designed for the very beginning of the said tragedy. The verses are these:—

“O thou that with surpassing glory crown’d!  
Look’st from thy sole dominion, like the god  
Of this new world; at whose sight all the stars  
Hide their diminish’d heads; to thee I call,  
But with no friendly voice; and add thy name,  
O Sun! to tell thee how I hate thy beams  
That bring to my remembrance, from what state  
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere;  
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,  
Warring in Heaven, against Heaven’s glorious King.”

There is another very remarkable passage in the composure of this poem, which I have a particular occasion to remember; for whereas I had the perusal of it from the very beginning, for some years, as I went from time to time to visit him, in a

parcel of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time, which being written by whatever hand came next, might possibly want correction as to the orthography and pointing; having as the summer came on, not having been showed any for a considerable while, and, desiring the reason thereof, was answered: That his vein never happily flowed but from the autumnal equinoctial to the vernal, and that whatever he attempted [otherwise] was never to his satisfaction, though he courted his fancy never so much, so that in all the years he was about this poem, he may be said to have spent but half his time therein.

It was but a little before the King's restoration that he wrote and published his book *In Defence of a Commonwealth*, so undaunted he was in declaring his true sentiments to the world; and not long before, his *Power of the Civil Magistrate in Ecclesiastical Affairs*, and his *Treatise against Hirelings*, just upon the King's coming over; having a little before been sequestered from his office of Latin secretary and the salary thereunto belonging.

He was forced to leave his house also in Petty-France, where all the time of his abode there, which was eight years as above-mentioned, he was frequently visited by persons of quality, particularly my Lady Ranalagh, whose son for some time he instructed; all learned foreigners of note, who could not part out of this city, without giving a visit to a person so eminent; and lastly, by particular friends that had a high esteem for him, *viz.* Mr. Andrew Marvel, young Lawrence (the son of him that was president of Oliver's council), to whom there is a sonnet among the rest, in his printed *Poems*; Mr. Marchamont Needham, the writer of *Politicus*; but above all, Mr. Cyriac Skinner whom he honored with two sonnets, one long since public among his *Poems*, the other but newly printed.

His next removal was, by the advice of those that wished him well and had a concern for his preservation, into a place of retirement and abscondance, till such time as the current of affairs for the future should instruct him what farther course to take. It was a friend's house in Bartholomew Close, where

he lived till the act of oblivion came forth; which it pleased God, proved as favorable to him as could be hoped or expected, through the intercession of some that stood his friends both in Council and Parliament; particularly in the House of Commons, Mr. Andrew Marvel, a member for Hull, acted vigorously in his behalf and made a considerable party for him; so that, together with John Goodwin of Coleman Street, he was only so far excepted as not to bear any office in the Commonwealth.

Soon after appearing again in public, he took a house in Holborn near Red Lyon Fields; where he stayed not long, before his pardon having passed the seal, he removed to Jewin Street. There he lived when he married his 3d wife, recommended to him by his old friend Dr. Paget in Coleman Street. But he stayed not long after his new marriage, ere he removed to a house in the Artillery-walk leading to Bunhill Fields. And this was his last stage in this world, but it was of many years continuance, more perhaps than he had had in any other place besides.

Here he finished his noble poem, and published it in the year 1666. The first edition was printed in quarto by one Simons, a printer in Aldersgate Street; the other in a large octavo, by Starky near Temple-Bar, amended, enlarged, and differently disposed as to the number of books by his own hand, that is by his own appointment; the last set forth, many years since his death, in a large folio, with cuts added, by Jacob Tonson.

Here it was also that he finished and published his history of our nation till the Conquest, all complete so far as he went, some passages only excepted; which, being thought too sharp against the clergy, could not pass the hand of the licenser, were in the hands of the late Earl of Anglesey while he lived; where at present is uncertain.

It cannot certainly be concluded when he wrote his excellent tragedy entitled *Samson Agonistes*, but sure enough it is that it came forth after his publication of *Paradise Lost*, together with his other poem called *Paradise Regained*, which doubtless was begun and finished and printed after the other was published, and that in a wonderful short space considering the sub-

limeness of it; however, it is generally censured to be much inferior to the other, though he could not hear with patience any such thing when related to him. Possibly the subject may not afford such variety of invention, but it is thought by the most judicious to be little or nothing inferior to the other for style and decorum.

The said Earl of Anglesey, whom he presented with a copy of the unlicensed papers of his history, came often here to visit him, as very much coveting his society and converse; as likewise others of the nobility and many persons of eminent quality; nor were the visits of foreigners ever more frequent than in this place, almost to his dying day.

His treatise *Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism and Toleration*, &c. was doubtless the last thing of his writing that was published before his death. He had, as I remember, prepared for the press an answer to some little scribing quack in London, who had written a scurrilous libel against him; but whether by the dissuasion of friends, as thinking him a fellow not worth his notice, or for what other cause I know not, this answer was never published.

He died in the year 1673 towards the latter end of the summer and had a very decent interment according to his quality, in the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, being attended from his house to the church by several gentlemen then in town, his principal well-wishers and admirers.

He had three daughters who survived him many years (and a son) all by his first wife (of whom sufficient mention hath been made): Anne his eldest as above said, and Mary his second, who were both born at his house in Barbican; and Deborah the youngest, who is yet living, born at his house in Petty-France, between whom and his second daughter, the son, named John, was born as above-mentioned, at his apartment in Scotland Yard. By his second wife, Catharine, the daughter of captain Woodcock of Hackney, he had only one daughter, of which the mother, the first year after her marriage, died in childbed, and the child also within a month after. By his third wife Elizabeth, the daughter of one Mr. Minshal of Cheshire, (and kins-

woman to Dr. Paget), who survived him, and is said to be yet living, he never had any child.

And those he had by the first he made serviceable to him in that very particular in which he most wanted their service, and supplied his want of eyesight by their eyes and tongue. For though he had daily about him one or other to read to him; some persons of man's estate, who of their own accord greedily caught at the opportunity of being his readers, that they might as well reap the benefit of what they read to him as oblige him by the benefit of their reading; others of younger years sent by their parents to the same end; yet, excusing only the eldest daughter by reason of her bodily infirmity and difficult utterance of speech (which to say truth I doubt was the principal cause of excusing her), the other two were condemned to the performance of reading and exactly pronouncing of all the languages of whatever book he should at one time or other think fit to peruse; *viz.* the Hebrew (and I think the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, Spanish, and French. All which sorts of books to be confined to read, without understanding one word, must needs be a trial of patience almost beyond endurance; yet it was endured by both for a long time. Yet the irksomeness of this employment could not always be concealed, but broke out more and more into expressions of uneasiness; so that at length they were all (even the eldest also) sent out to learn some curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture that are proper for women to learn, particularly embroideries in gold or silver. It had been happy indeed if the daughters of such a person had been made in some measure inheritrixes of their father's learning; but since fate otherwise decreed, the greatest honor that can be ascribed to this now living (and so would have been to the others had they lived) is to be daughter to a man of his extraordinary character.

He is said to have died worth 1500 £ in money (a considerable estate, all things considered) besides household goods; for he sustained such losses as might well have broke any person less frugal and temperate than himself; no less than 2000 £ which he had put for security and improvement into the excise

office, but neglecting to recall it in time could never after get it out, with all the power and interest he had in the great ones of those times; besides another great sum by mismanagement and for want of good advice.

Thus I have reduced into form and order whatever I have been able to rally up, either from the recollection of my own memory of things transacted while I was with him, or the information of others equally conversant afterwards, or from his own mouth by frequent visits to the last.

I shall conclude with two material passages which though they relate not immediately to our author, or his own particular concerns, yet in regard they happened during his public employ and consequently fell especially most under his cognizance, it will not be amiss here to subjoin them. The first was this:

Before the war broke forth between the States of England and the Dutch, the Hollanders sent over three ambassadors in order to an accommodation; but they returning *re infecta*, the Dutch sent away a plenipotentiary, to offer peace upon much milder terms, or at least to gain more time. But this plenipotentiary could not make such haste but that the Parliament had procured a copy of their instructions in Holland, which were delivered by our author to his kinsman that was then with him, to translate for the Council to view before the said plenipotentiary had taken shipping for England; an answer to all he had in charge lay ready for him, before he made his public entry into London.

In the next place there came a person with a very sumptuous train, pretending himself an agent from the prince of Condé, then in arms against Cardinal Mazarin: the Parliament mistrusting him, set their instrument so busily at work, that in four or five days they had procured intelligence from Paris that he was a spy from King Charles; whereupon the very next morning our author's kinsman was sent to him with an order of Council commanding him to depart the kingdom within three days, or expect the punishment of a spy.

By these two remarkable passages, we may clearly discover the industry and good intelligence of those times.

## AN ANONYMOUS LIFE OF MILTON\*

To write the lives of single persons is then a commendable undertaking, when by it some moral benefit is designed to mankind. He who has that in aim, will not employ his time or pen to record the history of bad men, how successful or great soever they may have been; unless by relating their tragical ends (which, through the just judgment of the Almighty, most commonly overtakes them) or by discriminating, with a due note of infamy, whatever is criminal in their actions, he warn the reader to flee their example.

But to celebrate, whether the gifts or graces, the natural endowments, or acquitted laudable habits of persons eminent in their generations, while it gives glory to God, the bestower of all good things, and (by furnishing a model) tends to the edification of our brethren, is little less than the duty of every Christian; which seems acknowledged by the late supervisors of our Common Prayer when they added to the Collect for the church militant, a clause commemorating the *Saints and Servants of God departed this life in his Fear*.

That he who is the subject of this discourse made it his endeavor to be thought worthy of that high character, will, I make no doubt, appear to the impartial reader from the particulars which I shall with all sincerity relate of his life and works.

The learned Mr. John Milton, born about the year sixteen hundred and eight, is said to be descended from an ancient knightly family in Buckinghamshire, that gave name to the chief place of their abode. However that be, his father was entitled to a true nobility in the Apostle Paul's Heraldry; having been disinherited about the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign by his father, a Romanist, who had an estate of five hun-

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\* Malone's date for the anonymous Life of Milton—1686 or 1687—is accepted by Edward S. Parsons in "Concerning 'The Earliest Life of Milton'" (*ELH* IX, June, 1942, pp. 106-15). In the following reply (pp. 116-7) Professor Allan R. Benham reasserts his belief that the anonymous Life was essentially a reply to Anthony Wood's treatment of Milton in *Athenae Oxonienses* (1691).



dred pound a year at Stainton St. John in Oxfordshire, for reading the Bible. Upon this occasion he came young to London, and being taken care of by a relation of his, a scrivener, he became free of that profession; and was so prosperous in it, and the consortship of a prudent, virtuous wife, as to be able to breed up in a liberal manner, and provide a competency for two sons and a daughter. After which, out of a moderation not usual with such as have tasted the sweets of gain, and perhaps naturally inclined rather to a retired life by his addiction to music (for his skill in which he stands registered among the composers of his time), he gave over his trade and went to live in the country.

This his eldest son had his institution to learning both under public and private masters; under whom, through the pregnancy of his parts and his indefatigable industry (sitting up constantly at his study till midnight), he profited exceedingly; and early in that time wrote several grave and religious poems, and paraphrased some of David's Psalms.

At about eighteen years of age he went to Christ's College in Cambridge; where for his diligent study, his performance of public exercises, and for choice verses, written on the occasions usually solemnized by the universities, as well for his virtuous and sober life, he was in high esteem with the best of his time.

After taking his degree of Master of Arts he left the university, and, having no design to take upon him any of the particular learned professions, applied himself for five years, at his father's house in the country, to the diligent reading of the best classic authors, both divine and human; sometimes repairing to London, from which he was not far distant, for learning music and the mathematics.

Being now become master of what useful knowledge was to be had in books, and competently skilled amongst others, in the Italian language, he made choice of that country to travel into, in order to polish his conversation, and learn to know men. And having received instructions how to demean himself with that wise, observing nation, as well as how to shape his journey,

from Sir Henry Wotton, whose esteem of him appears in an elegant letter to him upon that subject, he took his way through France. In this kingdom, the manners and genius of which he had in no admiration, he made small stay, nor contracted any acquaintance; save that, with the recommendation of Lord Scudamore, our King's Ambassador at Paris, he waited on Hugo Grotius, who was there under that character from the Crown of Sweden.

Hasting to Italy by the way of Nice, and passing through Genoa, Leghorn, and Pisa he arrived at Florence. Here he lived two months in familiar and elegant conversation with the choice wits of that city, and was admitted by them to their private academies; an economy much practised among the virtuosi of those parts, for the communication of polite literature, as well as for the cementing of friendships. The reputation he had with them they expressed in several commendatory verses, which are extant in his book of poems. From Florence he went to Rome, where, as in all places, he spent his time in the choicest company; and amongst others there, in that of Lucas Holstein.

At Naples, which was his next remove, he became acquainted with Marquis Manso, a learned person, and so aged as to have been contemporary and intimate with Torquato Tasso, the famous Italian heroic. This nobleman obliged him by very particular civilities, accompanying him to see the rarities of the place, and paying him visits at his lodging; also sent him the testimony of a great esteem in this distich:

Ut Mens, Forma, Decor Facies, Mos, si Pietas sic,  
Non Anglus, verum herclè Angelus ipse fores.

Yet excused himself at parting for not having been able to do him more honor by reason of his resolute owning his religion. This he did whensoever by any one's enquiry occasion was offered; not otherwise forward to enter upon discourses of that nature. Nor did he decline its defense in the like circumstances even in Rome itself on his return thither; though he had been advised by letters from some friends to Naples, that the English

Jesuits designed to do him mischief on that account. Before his leaving Naples he returned the Marquis an acknowledgement of his great favors in an elegant copy of verses entitled *Mansus*, which is extant amongst his other Latin poems.

From Rome he revisited Florence for the sake of his charming friends there; and then proceeded to Venice, where he shipped what books he had bought, and through the delicious country of Lombardy, and over the Alps to Geneva, where he lived in familiar conversation with the famous Diodati. Thence through France he returned home, having, with no ill management of his time, spent about fifteen months abroad.

He had by this time laid in a large stock of knowledge, which as he designed not for the purchase of wealth, so neither intended he it, as a miser's hoard, to lie useless. Having therefore taken a house, to be at full ease and quiet, and gotten his books about him, he set himself upon compositions, tending either to the public benefit of mankind, and especially his countrymen, or to the advancement of the Commonwealth of Learning. And his first labors were very happily dedicated to what had the chiefest place in his affections, and had been no small part of his study, the service of religion.

It was now the year 1640, and the nation was much divided upon the controversies about church government, between the Prelatical party, and the Dissenters, or, as they were commonly then called, Puritans. He had studied religion in the Bible and the best authors, had strictly lived up to its rules, and had no temporal concern depending upon any hierarchy to render him suspected, either to himself or others, as one that writ for interest; and, therefore, with great boldness and zeal offered his judgment, first in two *Books of Reformation* by way of address to a friend, and then, in answer to a bishop, he writ of *Prelatical Episcopacy* and *The Reason of Church Government*. After that, *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants defence* (the work of Bishop Hall) *against Smectymnuus* and *Apology for those Animadversions*.

In this while, his manner of settlement fitting him for the reception of a wife, he in a month's time (according to his prac-

tice of not wasting that precious talent) courted, married, and brought home from Forresthall, near Oxford, a daughter of Mr. Powell. But she, that was very young, and had been bred in a family of plenty and freedom, being not well pleased with his reserved manner of life, within a few days left him, and went back into the country with her mother. Nor though he sent several pressing invitations could he prevail with her to return, till about four years after, when Oxford was surrendered (the nighness of her father's house to that garrison having for the most part of the meantime hindered any communication between them), she of her own accord came, and submitted to him, pleading that her mother had been the inciter of her to that frowardness. He, in the interval, who had entered into that state for the end designed by God and nature, and was then in the full vigor of his manhood, could ill bear the disappointment he met with by her obstinate absenting; and, therefore, thought upon a divorce, that he might be free to marry another; concerning which he also was in treaty. The lawfulness and expedience of this, duly regulate in order to all those purposes for which marriage was at first instituted, had upon full consideration and reading good authors been formerly his opinion; and the necessity of justifying himself now concurring with the opportunity, acceptable to him, of instructing others in a point of so great concern to the peace and preservation of families, and so likely to prevent temptations as well as mischiefs, he first writ *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, then *Colasterion*, and after *Tetrachordon*. In these he taught the right use and design of marriage; then the original and practice of divorces amongst the Jews, and showed that our Saviour, in those four places of the Evangelists, meant not the abrogating but rectifying the abuses of it; rendering to that purpose another sense of the word fornication (and which is also the opinion amongst others of Mr. Selden in his *Uxor Hebraea*) than what is commonly received. Martin Bucer's *Judgment* in this matter he likewise translated into English. The Assembly of Divines then sitting at Westminster, though formerly obliged by his learned pen in the defense of Smectymnuus, and other their

controversies with the bishops, now impatient of having the clergies' jurisdiction, as they reckoned it, invaded, instead of answering, or disproving what those books had asserted, caused him to be summoned for them before the Lords. But that house, whether approving the doctrine, or not favoring his accusers, soon dismissed him.

This was the mending of a decay in the superstructure, and had for object only the well-being of private persons, or at most of families. His small treatise of *Education*, addressed to Mr. Hartlib, was the laying a foundation also of public weal. In it he prescribed an easy and delightful method for training up gentry in such a manner to all sorts of literature, as that they might at the same time by like degrees advance in virtue and abilities to serve their country, subjoining directions for their attaining other necessary or ornamental accomplishments; and it seemed he designed in some measure to put this in practise. He had, from his first settling, taken care of instructing his two nephews by his sister Phillips, and, as it happened, the son of some friend. Now he took a large house, where the Earle of Barrimore, sent by his aunt the Lady Ranalagh, Sir Thomas Gardiner of Essex, and others were under his tuition. But whether it were that the tempers of our gentry would not bear the strictness of his discipline, or for what other reason, he continued that course but a while.

His next public work, and which seemed to be his particular province, who was so jealous in promoting knowledge, was *Areopagitica*, written in manner of an oration, to vindicate the freedom of the press from the tyranny of licensers; who either enslaved to the dictates of those that put them into office, or prejudiced by their own ignorance, are wont to hinder the coming out of any thing which is not consonant to the common received opinions, and by that means deprive the public of the benefit of many useful labors.

Hitherto all his writings had for subject the propagation of religion or learning, or the bettering some more private concerns of mankind. In political matters he had published nothing. And it was now the time of the King's coming upon

his trial, when some of the Presbyterian ministers, out of malignity to the Independent party, who had supplanted them, more than from any principles of loyalty, asserted clamorously in their sermons and writings the privilege of kings from all accountableness. Or (to speak in the language of this time) non-resistance and passive obedience to be the doctrine of all the Reformed Churches. This general thesis, which encouraged all manner of tyranny, he opposed by good arguments, and the authorities of several eminently learned protestants in a book titled *The Tenure of Kings*, but without any particular application to the dispute then on foot in this nation.

Upon the change of government which succeeded the King's death he was, without any seeking of his, by the means of a private acquaintance, who was a member of the new Council of State, chosen Latin Secretary. In this public station his abilities and the acuteness of his parts, which had lain hid in his privacy, were soon taken notice of, and he was pitched upon to elude the artifice of Εἰκὼν Βασιλική. This he had no sooner performed answerably to the expectation from his wit and pen, in Εἰκουροκλάστης, but another adventure expected him.

Salmasius, a professor in Holland, who had in a large treatise, not long before, maintained the parity of church governors against Episcopacy, put out *Defensio Caroli Regis*, and in it, amongst other absurdities, justified (as indeed it was unavoidable in the defense of that cause, which was styled *Bellum Episcopale*) to the contradiction of his former book, the pretensions of the bishops. Him Mr. Milton, by the order of his masters, answered in *Defensio pro populo Anglicano*, both in more correct Latin, to the shame of the other's grammarship, and by much better reasoning. For Salmasius being a foreigner, and grossly ignorant of our laws and constitution (which in all nations are the respective distinguishing principles of government), either brought no arguments from thence, or such only (and by him not seldom mistaken or misapplied) as were partially suggested to him by those whose cause he had undertaken; and which, having during the many years of our divisions been often ventilated, received an easy solution. Nor

had he given proof of deeper learning in that which is properly called politics, while he made use of trite instances, as that of the government of bees, and such like to prove the preëminency of monarchy; and all along so confounded it with tyranny (as also he did the Episcopal with the Papal government), that he might better have passed for a defender of the grand Signor, and the Council of Trent, than of a lawful king and a reformed church. For this and reneging his former principles he was by Mr. Milton facetiously exposed; nor did he ever reply, though he lived three years after.

But what he wisely declined, the further provoking such an adversary, or persisting to defend a cause he so ill understood, was attempted in *Clamor Regii Sanguinis*, etc., in which Salmasius was hugely extolled, and Mr. Milton as falsely defamed. The anonymous author, Mr. Milton, who had by his last book gained great esteem and many friends among the learned abroad, by whom, and by public ministers coming hither he was often visited, soon discovered to be Morus, formerly a professor and minister at Geneva, then living in Holland. Him, in *Secunda Defensio pro populo Anglicano*, he rendered ridiculous for his trivial and weak treatise under so tragical a title, containing little of argument, which had not before suffered with Salmasius. And because it consisted most of railing and false reproaches, he, in no unpleasant manner, from very good testimonies retorted upon him the true history of his notorious impurities, both at Geneva and Leyden. Himself he also, by giving a particular ingenuous account of his whole life, vindicated from those scurrilous aspersions, with which that book had endeavored to blemish him; adding perhaps thereby also reputation to the cause he defended, at least with impartial readers, when they should reflect upon the different qualifications of the respective champions. And when Morus afterwards strove to clear himself of being the author, and to represent Mr. Milton as an injurious defamer in that particular, he in *Defensio pro se* by very good testimonies, and other circumstantial proofs justified his having fixed it there, and made good sport of the other's shallow evasions.

While he was thus employed his eyesight totally failed him; not through any immediate or sudden judgment, as his adversaries insultingly affirmed, but from a weakness which his hard, nightly study in his youth had first occasioned, and which by degrees had for some time before deprived him of the use of one eye. And the issues and seatons, made use of to save or retrieve that, were thought by drawing away the spirits, which should have supplied the optic vessels, to have hastened the loss of the other. He was, indeed, advised by his physicians of the danger, in his condition, attending so great intentness as that work required. But he, who was resolute in going through with what upon good consideration he at any time designed, and to whom the love of truth and his country was dearer than all things, would not for any danger decline their defense.

Nor did his darkness discourage or disable him from prosecuting, with the help of amanuenses, the former design of his calmer studies. And he had now more leisure, being dispensed with by having a substitute allowed him, and sometimes instructions sent home to him, from attending in his office of secretary.

It was now that he began that laborious work of amassing out of all the classic authors, both in prose and verse, a *Latin Thesaurus* to the emendation of that done by Stephanus; also the composing *Paradise Lost*, and the framing a body of divinity out of the Bible. All which, notwithstanding the several calamities befalling him in his fortunes, he finished after the Restoration: as also the *British History* down to the Conquest, *Paradise Regained*, *Samson Agonistes*, a tragedy, *Logica and Accedence*, commenced *Grammar* and had begun a *Greek Thesaurus*; having scarce left any part of learning unimproved by him, as in *Paradise Lost* and *Regained* he more especially taught all virtue.

In these works, and the instruction of some youth or other at the intreaty of his friends, he in great serenity spent his time and expired no less calmly in the year 1674.

He had naturally a sharp wit, and steady judgment; which helps toward attaining learning he improved by an indefatigable attention to his study; and was supported in that by a tem-



perance, always observed by him, but in his youth even with great nicety. Yet did he not reckon this talent but as entrusted with him; and therefore dedicated all his labors to the glory of God and some public good; neither binding himself to any of the gainful professions, nor having any worldly interest for aim in what he taught. He made no address or court for the employment of Latin secretary, though his eminent fitness for it appears by his printed letters of that time. And he was so far from being concerned in the corrupt designs of his masters, that whilst in his first and second *Defensio pro populo Anglicano* he was an advocate for liberty against tyranny and oppression (which to him seemed the case, as well by the public declarations on the one side [and he was a stranger to their private counsels], as by the arguments on the other side, which run mainly upon the justifying of exorbitant and lawless power), he took care all along strictly to define and persuade to true liberty, and especially in very solemn perorations at the close of those books; where he also, little less than prophetically, denounced the punishments due to the abusers of that specious name. And as he was not linked to one party by self interest, so neither was he divided from the other by animosity; but was forward to do any of them good offices, when their particular cases afforded him ground to appear on their behalf. And especially, if on the score of wit or learning, they could lay claim to his peculiar patronage. Of which were instances, among others, the grandchild of the famous Spencer, a papist suffering in his concerns in Ireland, and Sir William Davenant when taken prisoner, for both whom he procured relief.

This his sincerity, and disentanglement of any private ends with his sentiments relating to the public, proceeded no doubt from a higher principle, but was in great part supported, and temptations to the contrary avoided by his constant frugality; which enabled him at first to live within compass of the moderate patrimony his father left him, and afterwards to bear with patience, and no discomposure of his way of living, the great losses which befell him in his fortunes. Yet he was not sparing to buy good books, of which he left a fair collection; and was

generous in relieving the wants of his friends. Of his gentleness and humanity he likewise gave signal proof in receiving home, and living in good accord till her death with his first wife, after she had so obstinately absented from him. During which time, as neither in any other scene of his life, was he blemished with the least unchastity.

From so Christian a life, so great learning, and so unbiassed a search after truth it is not probable any errors in doctrine should spring. And, therefore, his judgment in his body of divinity concerning some speculative points, differing perhaps from that commonly received, (and which is thought to be the reason that never was printed) neither ought rashly to be condemned, and however himself not to be uncharitably censured; who, by being a constant champion for the liberty of opining, expressed much candor towards others. But that this age is insensible of the great obligations it has to him, is too apparent in that he has no better a pen to celebrate his memory.

He was of a moderate stature, and well proportioned, of a ruddy complexion, light brown hair, and handsome features; save that his eyes were none of the quickest. But his blindness, which proceeded from a gutta serena, added no further blemish to them. His deportment was sweet and affable; and his gate erect and manly, bespeaking courage and undauntedness (or a *nil conscire*), on which account he wore a sword while he had his sight, and was skilled in using it. He had an excellent ear, and could bear a part both in vocal and instrumental music. His moderate estate left him by his father was, through his good economy, sufficient to maintain him. Out of his secretary's salary he had saved two thousand pounds, which, being lodged in the excise, and that bank failing upon the Restoration, he utterly lost. Besides which, and the ceasing of his employment, he had no damage by that change of affairs. For he early sued out his pardon; and by means of that, when the Sergeant of the house of Commons had officiously seized him, was quickly set at liberty. He had, too, at the first return of the Court in good manners left his house in Petty France, which had a door into the park; and in all other things demean-

ing himself peaceable, was so far from being reckoned disaffected, that he was visited at his house on Bunhill by a chief officer of state, and desired to employ his pen on their behalf. And when the subject of divorce was under consideration with the Lords, upon the account of the Lord Ross, he was consulted by an eminent member of that house. By the great fire in 1666 he had a house in Bread Street burnt, which was all the real estate he had.

He rendered his studies and various works more easy and pleasant by allotting them their several portions of the day. Of these the time friendly to the Muses fell to his poetry; and he, waking early (as is the use of temperate men), had commonly a good stock of verses ready against his amanuensis came; which if it happened to be later than ordinary, he would complain, saying *he wanted to be milked*. The evenings he likewise spent in reading some choice poets, by way of refreshment after the days toil, and to store his fancy against morning. Besides his ordinary lectures out of the Bible and the best commentators on the week day, that was his sole subject on Sundays. And David's Psalms were in esteem with him above all poetry. The youths that he instructed from time to time served him often as amanuenses, and some elderly persons were glad for the benefit of his learned conversation, to perform that office. His first wife died a while after his blindness seized him, leaving him three daughters, that lived to be women. He married two more, whereof one survived him. He died in a fit of the gout, but with so little pain or emotion that the time of his expiring was not perceived by those in the room. And though he had been long troubled with that disease, insomuch that his knuckles were all callous, yet was he not ever observed to be very impatient. He had this elegy in common with the patriarchs and kings of Israel, that he was gathered to his people; for he happened to be buried in Cripplegate, where about thirty years before he had by chance also interred his father.

## *Some Early* ORATORICAL PERFORMANCES

### *I. Delivered in College*

#### WHETHER DAY OR NIGHT IS THE MORE EXCELLENT

THE NOBLEST MASTERS of rhetoric have left behind them in various screeds a maxim which can hardly have escaped you, my academic friends, and which says that in every type of speech—demonstrative, deliberative, or judicial—the opening should be designed to win the good will of the audience. On those terms only can the minds of the auditors be made responsive and the cause that the speaker has at heart be won. If this be true (and—not to disguise the truth—I know that it is a principle established by the vote of the entire learned world), how unlucky I am! What a plight I am in today! In the very first words of my speech I am afraid that I am going to say something unbecoming to a speaker, and that I shall be obliged to neglect the first and most important duty of an orator. And in fact, what good will can I expect from you when in as great an assembly as this I recognize almost every face within eyeshot as unfriendly to me? I seem to have come to play an orator's part before an utterly unsympathetic audience. Such are the quarrels that the competitive spirit engenders even in colleges among those who are interested in different subjects and even among those who pursue the same subjects with different conceptions of them. But I do not care if

Polydamas and the Trojan women prefer Labeo to me—  
Nothing there to take seriously.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The verse from Persius' *Satires* (I, 4-5) which Milton quotes, warns his audience that he is no more afraid of them than Persius was of the Roman public. Persius was echoing Hector's contempt for his critics, Polydamas and the Trojan women (*Iliad* XXII, 100), which he turned

But, to save me from utter despair, if I am not mistaken, I see here and there a few whose expressions silently but by no means uncertainly indicate how friendly their wishes are. I should rather have their approval—however few they be—than that of countless legions of ignorant fellows who have no mind, no reasoning faculties, no sound judgment, and who try to sell themselves by their bragging and ridiculous froth of talk. Strip them of the patches that they have begged from our most modern authors and—by the Eternal—you will find them as empty as a bean pod.<sup>2</sup> Once their baggage of phrases and wise-cracks is exhausted, there is not so much as a grunt in them, and they are as dumb as the little frogs of Seriphus.<sup>3</sup> If Heraclitus were in the land of the living,<sup>4</sup> how hard even he would have to struggle to keep from laughing if, by the gods' permission, he should happen to see these little orators (whom he might have heard a short time ago tragically bombasting Euripides' Orestes or Hercules'<sup>5</sup> rant in his dying agony) creeping off, now that their little stock of words is exhausted and their superciliousness has vanished, like certain little vermin with their horns drawn in.

But I must end this little digression. If there is anyone who has spurned all conditions of peace and declared a truceless war against me, at this moment I will not let pride prevent me from begging and appealing to him to set his quarrel aside for a little while and stand by as an impartial judge in this debate, and not to allow the speaker's fault (if he is at fault) to reflect

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against a contemporary, Attius Labeo, whom the same satire mentions as the author of a drink-inspired *Iliad*. According to a note in Barton Holyday's translation of the *Satires* (1616), Persius intended Polydamas to represent (and challenge) the emperor Nero.

<sup>2</sup> Athenaeus (early third century A.D.) put this jibe into the mouth of one of his gossiping gourmets in *The Deipnosophists* (Book VIII, 362b).

<sup>3</sup> The proverbially silent frogs of Seriphus (the tiny Aegean island of Serfo) often figure in Juvenal's *Satires* (e.g. VI, 564 and X, 170).

<sup>4</sup> "To weep with Heraclitus," as Burton recalled in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (p. 4), was proverbial. Milton may have referred to him because of his reputation for misanthropy and intolerance of fools in his native Ephesus in the fifth century B.C.

<sup>5</sup> The title roles in Euripides' tragedy of *Herakles* and melodrama of *Orestes* were both favorite parts for amateur declamation.

invidiously on so excellent and glorious a cause. If you think what I have said too mordant and vinegary, I confess that I have acted deliberately, for I intend to have the introduction to my speech resemble the lowering of early dawn, from whose darkest clouds comes the loveliest day.

Whether Day is more excellent than Night, Gentlemen, is no ordinary topic for discussion.<sup>6</sup> Its meticulous and minute examination is the task assigned to me as my part in the business of this morning,—though the subject seems to suit a poetical performance better than it does an oratorical competition.

Did I say that Night has challenged Day? What does this mean? What kind of a contest is this? Are the Titans<sup>7</sup> redrawing their ancient battle lines and fighting the Phlegraean struggle over again? Or has Earth spawned some new offspring of portentous size to assail the gods of heaven? Or has Typhoeus<sup>8</sup> shaken off the mighty mass of Mount Etna that was piled on top of him? Or has Briareus<sup>9</sup> dodged Cerberus and slipped out of his adamant chains? What is it that now for the third time has stirred up the infernal deities with the hope of winning heaven's empire? Is there no respect for Jove's thunder or Athena's<sup>10</sup> invincible might, which did such execution in olden times among the sons of Earth? Has the

<sup>6</sup> Milton is striking a note of ironical playfulness which runs throughout the entire performance. His subject resembles the assignments on the relative merits of earth and water, air and fire, which we find as late as 1657 in such a textbook as John Tesmanus, *Exercitationum Rhetoricorum Libri VIII*, published in Amsterdam, but representative of English as well as of continental practice.

<sup>7</sup> Hesiod's *Theogony* (617-735) tells the story of the attack of the Titans on the Olympian gods, and Pindar's first *Nemean Ode* ends with an account of their overthrow on the plains of Phlegra, in Macedonia, which became traditional. Cf. Milton's allusions in *P.L.* I, 197-200, and *Nature is not Subject to Old Age*, 30-2.

<sup>8</sup> Typhoeus (the smoky one), whose name seems to have made him a symbol of volcanic activity to the Greeks, was the youngest son of Earth and Tartarus. Pindar's first *Pythian Ode*, 15, describes him as buried by Zeus under Mount Etna.

<sup>9</sup> The hundred-handed Briareus was the most formidable of the giants whom Zeus overwhelmed with mountains. Cf. *Theogony*, 617-620.

<sup>10</sup> Natale Conti, *Mythologiae* IV, v, "On Pallas Athene," assembles several versions of the story of Athene's and of Bacchus' parts in the struggle of Zeus with the Titans.

memory of Father Bacchus' rout of the giants through the vaults of heaven quite faded out of mind? Far from it! Night well remembers, to her sorrow, how most of her brothers were slain by Jupiter and the fleeing survivors driven down to the uttermost recesses of hell's pit. Now in her fright she is preparing for nothing less than war, but she prefers to work with charges and complaints. After the quarrel has been well fought out with nails and fists, she resorts, like a woman, to talking and wrangling, in order, I suppose, to discover whether she is better with her tongue or her weapons. Believe me, I shall lose no time in showing how recklessly and arrogantly she is claiming the mastery, and how weak her case is compared with Day's. And indeed I see Day herself, roused by the cock's crowing, hurrying faster than usual on her way so as to hear what is going to be said in her praise. And now, to begin!

Since everyone thinks his honor and personal dignity established if he can prove his descent from noble forebears and his possession of the ancient blood of kings and gods, my first inquiry must be, which of the two is of the more illustrious birth; my next, which is the more honored by antiquity; and my third, which serves mankind the better.

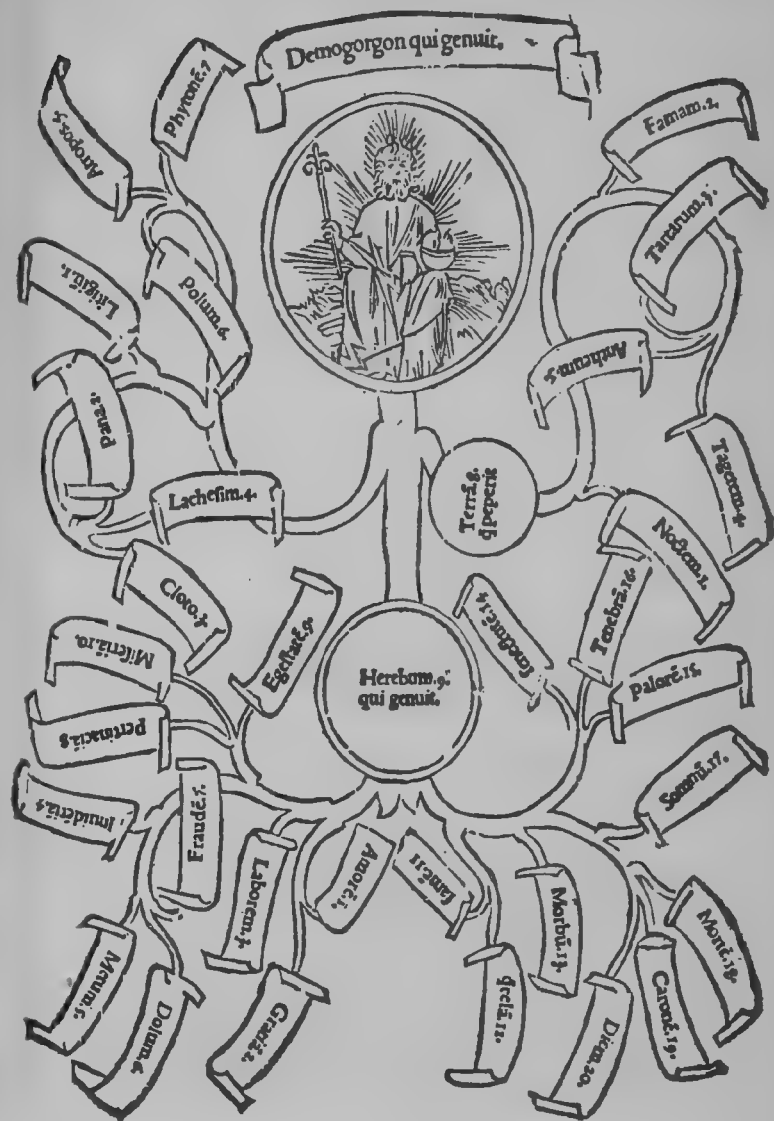
Among the oldest writers on mythology I find it recorded that, beside the other children of whom Demogorgon begot so many, that progenitor of all the gods (who, I divine, was the same as he whom the ancients called Chaos) sired Earth. By an unknown father she became the mother of Night, though Hesiod differs a little from this and prefers to make her Chaos-begotten in the verse,<sup>11</sup>

Of Chaos were Erebus and black Night born.

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<sup>11</sup> The verse is from the *Theogony*, 123. The prime source of the fantasies about Night's parentage and progeny with which Milton amuses his audience is the following passage of Hesiod. With minor variations such as Milton suggests, it was to be found popularized in the writings of many Renaissance mythographers, and in traditional illustrations of Boccaccio's *Genealogy of the Gods*, one of which is reproduced here from the edition of Augustinus de Zannis de Portesio (Venice, 1511), the myth was visualized. Boccaccio makes Night the child of Demogorgon and the sister of Erebus.

## PRIMVS HABET STIRPEM DEMOGORGONIS AETHERE DEMPTO





Whoever her father may have been, when she ripened to an age fit for marriage, the shepherd Phanes asked her for his wife. In spite of her mother's approval, she rebelled and refused to share the bed of a man who was a stranger to her, whom she had never seen, and whose habits were so very unlike her own. Taking her refusal in bad part, Phanes changed his love into hatred and vengefully pursued this dark daughter of earth through every country in the world to kill her. Now she feared him as her enemy no less than she had despised him as her lover. So even among the most distant nations and in the most remote places, and even in her own mother's embrace, she did not feel safe enough, and she stealthily and darkly betook herself to the incestuous embrace of her brother Erebus. So she both escaped from the burden of her fear and got a husband very much of her own kind. And it is by this charming conjugal couple that Aether and Day are said to have been begotten, according to the author whom I have previously quoted, Hesiod:<sup>12</sup>

From Night were Aether and Day born,  
Whom she brought forth, conceiving them in Erebus' embrace.

But these inventions of the poets—particularly the Greek poets—about the gods are hardly entitled to our confidence. Our Muses, who are more humane than theirs, and Philosophy herself, who is the neighbor of the gods, both forbid it. So let no one regard it as a slur on these writers that in so important a matter as this they should hardly seem adequate. If any of them has veered a point away from the truth, their genius—which was divine above all others—ought not to be blamed for the error. The blame should rest on the vicious and blind ignorance which covered the world in those days. *They* have won honor and glory enough simply because they settled men in fixed habitations who had been wandering like wild beasts in the forests and on the mountains,<sup>13</sup> and because they founded

<sup>12</sup> *Theogony*, 124-5.

<sup>13</sup> Milton is presenting a great commonplace. "What," asks Henry Peacham in the *Compleat Gentleman* (1634), p. 79, "were the songs of *Linus*, *Orpheus*, *Amphyon*, *Olympus*, and that ditty *Iopas* sang to his harpe

states and by their divine inspiration were the first to teach all the arts of which we are the heirs today—thanks to their presentation in the alluring disguise of poetry. The sole title of the poets to immortality—and a very noble one too—shall be the fact that they made so happy a beginning with that knowledge of the arts which they left to posterity to develop.

So—whoever you may be—do not be rash enough to accuse me of arrogance on the ground that I have done violence to the utterances of the old poets, and that I have altered them without authority. That is not what I am presuming to do. I am simply trying to bring them to the test of reason, to find out in this way whether they can stand the probe of strict truth.

First, then, the story that Night is the offspring of Earth has been learnedly and elegantly told by antiquity, for what could make Night cover the world but the solid and impenetrable earth coming between the sun's light and our horizon? As for the assertions of the mythologists that she was either motherless or fatherless,—they are gay fables, if indeed it is correctly deduced from them that she was a bastard or changeling, or that her parents were ashamed to recognize so notoriously ignoble a child. But why they should think that the superhumanly handsome Phanes should have been so much in love with Night—the negress, the mere shadow—as to propose marriage to her, seems a very hard riddle to answer on the evidence, unless the astounding scarcity of women in those days gave him no choice.

And now let us really come to grips with our subject. The ancients interpret Phanes either as the sun or the day, and they interpret the story of his first seeking Night in marriage and then pursuing her to punish her contempt for the union as meaning nothing else than the alternation of the days and nights. But to prove this what need was there to introduce Phanes as the wooer of Night when their ceaseless alternation and—as it seems—expulsion of each other by turns, might be better explained by their inborn and irreconcilable hatred?

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at *Dido's* banquet, but Naturall and Morall Philosophy, sweetned with the pleasance of Numbers, that Rudenesse and Barbarisme might the better taste and digest the lessons of civility?"

For it is a well enough established fact that from the dawn of creation light and darkness have disagreed between themselves in a most bitter quarrel. My firm belief is that Night got her name of *euphrone*<sup>14</sup> from her prudence and discretion in refusing to entangle herself in a marriage with Phanes. If she had once admitted him to her bridal bed, there can be no doubt that she would either have been annihilated by the unbearable brightness of his rays or else consumed in a fiery death, such as they say that Semele<sup>15</sup> suffered, although it was against the will of her lover, Jupiter. So with her eye on her own safety, it seems, she made choice of Erebus. Hence comes that clever and elegant epigram of Martial;<sup>16</sup>

The worst of husbands and the worst of wives  
I muse not at the bliss your match contrives.

Nor, in my judgment, ought the veil of silence to be drawn over the lovely progeny—so worthy of herself—with which Night blessed her husband; Tribulation, forsooth, and Envy, Fear, Deceit, Fraud, Pertinacity, Poverty, Penury, Starvation, Complaint, Illness, Old Age, Pallor, Darkness, Sleep, Death, and the child of her last delivery, Charon.<sup>17</sup> So the situation squares well with the Greek proverb: ‘from a bad crow, bad eggs.’

Then there is no lack of writers who say that Night also

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<sup>14</sup> The epithet *euphrone* was applied euphemistically to night, for its literal meaning is “well-thinking” or “having good intentions.” Milton suggests that it should be taken to mean “shrewd.”

<sup>15</sup> In *Metamorphoses* III, 259–315, Ovid tells the destruction of Semele when she took the jealous Juno’s advice to ask her lover Jupiter to visit her in his full, heavenly glory.

<sup>16</sup> Milton distorted the last line of the epigram (Martial, *Epigrams* VIII. 35) to make it fit his purpose. The original reads:

Cum sitis similes, paresque vita,  
Uxor pessima, pessimus maritus,  
Miror non bene convenire vobis.

<sup>17</sup> Charon, the ferryman of souls over the Styx to the realms of death, is not found in Hesiod’s list of Night’s children (*Theogony*, 211–232), though it contains several names which are not found either here or in Boccaccio’s tree. Milton’s original list reads: Aerumna (ablative case), Invidia, Timore, Dolo, Fraude, Pertinacia, Paupertate, Miseria, Fame, Querela, Morbo, Senectute, Pallore, Caligine, Somno, Morte, Charonte.

bore Aether and Day to her husband Erebus. But is there any one—unless he is out of his wits—who does not hoot down and throw out such philosophy as he would the theories of Democritus<sup>18</sup> or the tales of his nurses? For does it seem likely that the dark and swarthy Night would spawn anything so lovely and so amiable and so agreeable and desirable to everyone? Such a child would have caused the mother's death at the moment of conception by bursting prematurely from her womb. She would have chased her father Erebus clean away. She would have made old gaffer Charon hide his blinking eyes at the very bottom of the Styx, and—if there are any hideouts in the underworld—she would have driven him off to them with sails as well as oars speeding him on his way. Day was not born in hell, and she has never been seen there, nor—except in defiance of the Fates—can she penetrate there even through the tiniest loophole. I'll tell you what. I dare assert that Day is older than Night, and that when the universe first emerged from chaos she brightened it with her far-spreading light—before Night began to take turns with her—unless we wilfully and wrongly identify that foul and hideous obscurity<sup>19</sup> with Night and with Demogorgon himself.

Therefore I regard Day as Heaven's first daughter<sup>20</sup> or rather as his son, whom he is said to have begotten to be the consolation of humanity and the terror of the deities of hell; lest Night should seize power and wipe out the boundary between Earth and Hades, and lest the ghosts and Furies and all the obscene tribe of monsters should leave their infernal stations and rush up into the world, and lest wretched mankind should be overwhelmed and, everywhere oppressed by dense darkness, living

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<sup>18</sup> Although Democritus (?470–380? B.C.) was one of the greatest natural philosophers in the ancient world, his atheism and the adoption of his atomic theory by the Epicureans inclined many Christian writers to accept a tradition that the citizens of his native Abdera, in Thræce, regarded him as insane.

<sup>19</sup> By *that . . . obscurity* Milton means the primeval chaos out of which Hesiod described the universe as arising.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Spenser's description of Night as one who was "begot in Demogorgon's hall," and who had seen "the secrets of the world unmade." (*F.Q.* I, v, 22, 5–6.)

men should have to endure the punishments of the spirits that have died.

Thus far, members of the university, we have been trying to drag the obscure progeny of Night out of their dark and deep shadows. You shall soon understand how worthy they are of their parentage—particularly if I should first try to the best of my small ability to praise the Day, though she herself excels the eloquence of all who praise her.

In the first place, what need can there possibly be to inform you how welcome and delightful she is to everything that is alive? When the birds themselves cannot hide their joy, but leave their little nests at the first flush of dawn and either trill it from the tree-tops in a sweet concert or else lift themselves up as close to the sun as they can fly to welcome the returning light. But the first of all to hail the coming of the sun is the sleepless cock.<sup>21</sup> Like some herald, he seems to command men to shake off slumber and go abroad, and run to meet the rising dawn. The goats gambol in the fields and the whole four-footed race leaps and capers in delight. Moreover the heliotrope, after mourning almost all night with her face turned eastward in expectation of her lover, Phoebus, now welcomes his approach with a caressing smile.<sup>22</sup> The marigold also and the rose, in order to do their best for the general happiness, open their breasts and are lavish with the perfume that they have kept for the sun alone. They grudge them to the Night, and shut themselves up inside their tiny leaves at evening's first approach. The other flowers lift their drooping, dewy heads and offer themselves to the sun, silently asking for his kisses to dry away the tears which they have shed for his absence. As the sun approaches, the Earth herself puts on a lovelier garment. The clouds in rainbow colors seem to deploy their long and festal ranks to wait upon the rising god.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *L'Allegro*, 49–50, and verses from the *Commonplace Book*, 3–4.

<sup>22</sup> Shakespeare's allusion to

pale primroses

That die unmarried ere they can behold  
Bright Phoebus in his strength,

(*A Winter's Tale* IV, iv, 122–4)

indicates the familiarity of this fancy. Cf. *Lycidas*, 142.

Now let me complete my argument and omit nothing that magnifies his glory. It is to him that the Persians—to him that the Libyans<sup>23</sup> have decreed divine honors;—to him that the Rhodians also dedicated the famous Colossus<sup>24</sup> whose vast bulk was fabricated by the marvellous skill of Chares of Lindus. To him likewise even today we have heard that the Indians of the Americas sacrifice with incense and splendor.

Gentlemen of the University, I call you to witness how welcome he is when he brings his light to you in the morning, after you have yearned for him and looked forward to his coming as one who would restore you to the gentle Muses, guardians of the culture for which you have an insatiable thirst, and from which the hateful night had divided you.

Last, I call the god Saturn, who was cast down from heaven to Tartarus, to witness how willingly he would return to the upper air from the hated shades, if only Jove would permit. Even Pluto himself betrays his strong preference for the light over his darkness by his many attempts to win the empire of heaven. So Orpheus says poetically and very truly in his Hymn to the goddess Aurora:<sup>25</sup>

In her all tribes of mortal men rejoice;  
Not one desires to fly that glorious face.  
Whene'er you shake the sweet sleep from our eyes,  
Joy thrills all hearts:—the creeping things, the race  
Four-footed, birds, and all within the sea's embrace.

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<sup>23</sup> *Libyans*: inhabitants of northeastern Africa generally. Milton probably thought of the great temple to the Egyptian sun god, Re, at Heliopolis, just above the Nile delta.

<sup>24</sup> Pliny's description (*Natural History* XXXIV, vii, 18) of the fallen colossus of Rhodes indicates that it must have been over one hundred feet high. It was erected in the third century B. C. by Chares of Lindus, the founder of the Rhodian school of architecture, to stand at the entrance of the harbor. The city is said to have had more than a hundred colossal statues to the sun.

<sup>25</sup> The Orphic *Hymn to Aurora* XXVIII, 7-11. Cf. Shakespeare, *Sonnet VII*, 1-4:

Lo, in the Orient when the gracious light  
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye  
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,  
Serving with looks his sacred majesty.

Nor is there anything wonderful here, for Day is no less useful than delightful, and only Day is suited to the pursuit of our practical affairs. What mortal would undertake to cross the broad and boundless seas if he despaired of the coming of day? Men would cross the ocean as the ghosts do Lethe and Acheron, hemmed about on every side by frightful darkness. Everyone would huddle in his own miserable hovel, hardly ever daring to creep out—with the inevitable result that human society would at once be destroyed. In vain would Apelles<sup>26</sup> have designed Venus rising from the sea; in vain would Zeuxis<sup>27</sup> have painted Helen, if blind and shadowy night robbed us of the sight of things that are so well worth seeing. In vain also would the earth bring forth its wealth of vines with their intricate, serpentine tangles of foliage; in vain would it produce the magnificent, tall trees. To no purpose would she trim herself with buds and blossoms, as if trying to reflect the sky overhead. Then, truly, no living thing would profit by the noblest of the senses, sight. With the eye of the world blinded, all things would fade and utterly die; nor would men themselves, inhabiting a universe quite blacked out, long survive the plague, for nothing would be available to support life, nor would anything prevent a general collapse into primeval chaos.

A man might go on inexhaustibly to add more to what has been said, but the modest Day herself would not permit him to go through every detail of the story. In swift flight she would hasten toward the sunset to put an end to her eulogist's transports. And already day is declining toward evening and is about to yield to night, in order to prevent your making the joke here in the midst of winter that the day seems the longest of summer. With your consent, however, may I just add a few thoughts that cannot properly be omitted?

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<sup>26</sup> Apelles (336–306? B. C.), whose life was spent mainly at the court of Alexander the Great, was thought to be best represented by his *Venus Anadyomene*, which represented the goddess rising from the sea in a cloud of spray.

<sup>27</sup> Zeuxis (424–400? B. C.), according to Cicero's story (*De Inventione Rhetorica* II, i), used the five most beautiful virgins of Croton as models for his painting of Helen of Troy.

With good reason the poets have written that night arises out of hell, for it is plainly impossible that such great evils should come in such great numbers from any other place to infest mankind. For when night comes, all things turn ugly and dark. Then truly there is no distinguishing between Helen and Canidia,<sup>28</sup> or between the most costly gems and the most worthless pebbles (if some gems did not vanquish even night's obscurity). Then also the most delightful places inspire our horror and aggravate it by their deep and melancholy silence. Whatever is anywhere abroad in the field, whether man or beast, loses no time in getting to his home or his lair. There they burrow under their covers and close their eyes against the dreadful apparitions of the night. Outside you will descry nothing except those dreaders of the light, footpads and thugs, who breathe out slaughter and rapine, and lay their plots against the citizens' property. Their reason for walking abroad only at night is their fear of being detected by day. For Day is not in the habit of leaving any villainy unexposed,<sup>29</sup> and so she cannot endure to have her light polluted by such wickedness. You meet nothing except ghosts and spectres and the hobgoblins that Night brings with her as her companions from the infernal realms. All the night they claim to have the earth under their jurisdiction, and to share it with mankind. That, I surmise, is why Night has sharpened our ears to make them quicker to catch the sighing of the shades, the shrieks of owls and night-birds, and the roars of lions, which hunger calls forth, and so to smite our hearts with greater terror. Hence it is as clear as crystal how false is the man who says that at night men are exempt from fear, and that night lulls all cares to rest. How vain and futile this fancy is, they know from bitter experience who have ever been conscience-stricken for any

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<sup>28</sup> Canidia, the gray-head, is Horace's name for the hag whose poisonous philtres figure in *Epodes* 3, 5, and 17, and whom he describes as dishevelled and crowned with serpent locks.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Spenser's turn to the formal contrast of Day with Night in Arthur's diatribe on Milton's subject in *The Faerie Queene* III, iv, 59, 1-2:

For day discovers all dishonest wayes,  
And sheweth each thing, as it is indeed.



crime, or hounded, by Sphinxes and Harpies, the Gorgon and Chimaeras, with their flaming torches. They also know, the wretches, who, with no one at hand to help and care for them, no one to soften their grief with a gentle word, let their vain complaints fall upon the senseless stones while over and over they long for the coming of dawn. So with very good reason the most accomplished of poets, Ovid,<sup>30</sup> called Night "the greatest nurse of cares."

As for the fact that at night our sleep renews and restores the bodies that are broken and weary from the day's work,—that were, sleep is not so valuable that we should honor Night on its account; for when we commit ourselves to slumber, we tacitly is a blessing of God and not the gift of Night. And even if it acknowledge that we are helpless and wretched mortals who cannot support our miserable little bodies for even a short while without repose. And truly what else is sleep than the image and likeness of death? So in Homer, Sleep and Death are twins,<sup>31</sup> the offspring of a single conception, born at a single birth. And finally, even the bright fires which the moon and the other stars display at night, are due to the sun, for they do not possess the light that they reflect, except as they borrow it from him.<sup>32</sup>

Who then but a child of darkness, a burglar, a dice-thrower, an all-night addict of the company of whores, and an all-day snorer,—who, I ask, but a fellow of this kind would undertake to defend a cause so unworthy and intrinsically so disreputable? I wonder that the ingrate dare even look upon this sun and

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<sup>30</sup> Ovid's familiar line from *Metamorphoses* VIII, 81, was paraphrased by Spenser in Arthur's diatribe against Night:

But well I wote, that to an heavy heart  
Thou art the roote and nourse of bitter cares,  
Breeder of new, renewer of old smarts.

(*Faerie Queene* III, iv, 57, 1-3.)

<sup>31</sup> The most outstanding Homeric reference to Sleep as the brother of Death occurs in *Iliad* XIV, 672 and 682.

<sup>32</sup> One of the obsolete astronomical theories reviewed by Copernicus in *De revolutionibus* X, i, is that of the followers of Plato, "supposing that all starres should have obscure and darcke bodyes shyninge with borrowed light like the Mone." Leonard Digges' translation, quoted by Francis Johnson in *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England*, p. 98.

that he unflinchingly enjoys his share in the common daylight which he insults. He deserves that the sun should smite him with the destroying violence of its rays, as if he were a new Python.<sup>33</sup> He deserves to be locked up in Cimmerian darkness to spend a long and odious lifetime. And he also deserves to have his oration put his audience to sleep, and to have his words inspire no more confidence than a dream. Then, half-asleep himself, he will be deluded into taking his hearers' nods and snores for applause as he brings his speech to a close.

But I see the black brows of Night, and I feel her dun shadows rising. I must withdraw, or Night will overwhelm me unawares. And you, my hearers, since Night is nothing but the passing and, as it were, the death of Day, avoid giving the preference to death over life, and rather award my cause the honor of your votes. So may the Muses make your studies fortunate! So may the Dawn, who is the Muses' friend, give ear to your petitions! And may Phoebus,<sup>34</sup> who sees and hears all things, grant the prayers of those in this assembly who are loyal to the cause of his glory. My speech has been made.

## *II. Delivered in the Public Schools*

### ON THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

IF, MEMBERS of the University, there is any room for my insufficiency after so many and such able speakers have been heard today, I shall now try, as far as my small ability permits, to show how friendly I am to the solemn ceremonial of this day. And though I come behind, I shall follow in the train of today's triumph of eloquence. And so, of course, I am avoiding trite and commonplace subjects. I have a horror of them, and the thought of this occasion and of those who, as I quite rightly expected, would deliver themselves of something fully worthy of it, has kindled and challenged my mind to the hard

<sup>33</sup> See *Reason of Church Government*, note 226.

<sup>34</sup> A recurring Homeric line describes the sun god, Phoebus Apollo, as him "who sees and hears all things."

attempt of a new theme. Both these considerations might well afford a stimulus and a spur for my lazy and otherwise indisposed mind. So it has occurred to me to offer a few preliminary remarks in a free style of eloquence and (as the saying is) "with open palm"<sup>1</sup> about that celestial harmony on which there is soon to be a debate, as it were, with the clenched fist;—but with due respect to the time limits, which both spur me and curb me. And yet I hope, my hearers, that you will take what I say as being said, as it were, in jest.

For what sane man would suppose that Pythagoras,<sup>2</sup> that god of philosophers, at whose name all the men of his times rose up to do solemn reverence—who, I say, would have supposed that he would have brought forward so well grounded a theory? Certainly, if he taught a harmony of the spheres, and a revolution of the heavens to that sweet music, he wished to symbolize

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<sup>1</sup> For the "open hand" of Rhetoric and the "closed fist" of Logic see *Of Education* note 21. Milton was ironic when he said that his subject was novel, for he knew that it had been discussed in several medieval works like John Scotus Erigena's *De divisione naturae* (Book III), and went back beyond Plato's *Republic* X, 616c–617d, where the eight planetary spheres are described in the vision of Er as turning on a great distaff which rests on the knees of Necessity, while the eight sirens sitting on the respective spheres sing each one her own note and together make the celestial harmony. In the *De coelo* II, ix, 290b, Aristotle challenged Plato's conception, pointing out that it was a Pythagorean theory which rested on the dubious assumption that the spheres can produce any sound, and that their revolutions are in ratios that would produce musical consonance. The Platonic conception, which inspired *At a Solemn Music* and the close of *Arcades*, entered Renaissance literature with the authority of the Florentine Neoplatonists. In 1622, Martin Fotherby, Bishop of Salisbury, summing up the historic arguments *pro* and *con*, concluded (*Atheomastix*, p. 318) that, while he could not affirm the music of the spheres "as a certainty," yet he could propose it "as a probabilitie: leaving every man to his owne liberty to beleieve it, or not to beleieve it, as he findeth himselfe most inclined in his mind."

<sup>2</sup> Pythagoras (late seventh century B. C.?) appealed to the imagination of Milton's contemporaries because his legendary travels (as Selden's *Law of Nature and Nations* I, ii, observes) were supposed to have included Palestine and (as Milton recalls in *Areopagitica*) England and Cambridge itself. Cf. *Arcades*, 63–9, and *At a Solemn Music*, 19–24, and notes. Meric Casaubon (*A Treatise of Use and Custom*, p. 58) quoted a certain Robertus Constantinus who accepted Pythagoras' theory of the music of the spheres, which he claimed to hear himself.

in a wise way the intimate relations of the spheres and their even revolution forever in accordance with the law of destiny. In this he seems to have followed the example of the poets—or, what is almost the same thing, of the divine oracles—by which no sacred and arcane mystery is ever revealed to vulgar ears without being somehow wrapped up and veiled. The greatest of Mother Nature's interpreters, Plato, has followed him, for he has told us that certain sirens have their respective seats on every one of the heavenly spheres and hold both gods and men fast bound by the wonder of their utterly harmonious song. And that universal interaction of all things, that lovely concord among them, which Pythagoras poetically symbolized as harmony, was splendidly and aptly represented by Homer's figure of the golden chain which Jove suspended from heaven.<sup>3</sup> Hence Aristotle, the rival and perpetual detractor of Pythagoras and Plato, hoping to pave his way to glory over the ruins of the theories of such great men, imputed this symphony of the heavens, which has never been heard, and this music of the spheres to Pythagoras. But, O Father Pythagoras, if only destiny or chance had brought it about that your spirit had transmigrated into me, you would not now be lacking a ready advocate, however great the load of infamy you might bear.<sup>4</sup>

And indeed why should not the heavenly bodies produce musical vibrations? Does it not seem probable to you, Aristotle? Certainly I find it hard to believe that your intelligences<sup>5</sup> could have endured the sedentary task of revolving the heavens for so many aeons, unless the ineffable chanting of the

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<sup>3</sup> Homer's story (*Iliad* VIII, 18-29) of the challenge of Zeus to the other gods to drag him from heaven by a golden chain, and of his boast that he would be able to lift them all up to heaven with it, passed through many allegorical interpretations, from that in Plato's *Thaetetus*, 153c, to Bacon's in *The Advancement of Learning* I, 1, 3: "The highest link of nature's chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair."

<sup>4</sup> The popular disrepute of Pythagoras' doctrine of transmigration of souls is illustrated by Malvolio's protest (in *Twelfth Night* IV, ii, 59) that he thought too "nobly" of the soul to "approve his opinion."

<sup>5</sup> The best discussion of the tenuous evidence that Aristotle believed in the movement of the planets by "intelligences" is by Sir W. D. Ross in *Aristotle's Physics* (Oxford, 1936), pp. 94-102.

stars had detained them when they would have departed, and persuaded them by its harmonies to delay. If you take that music out of heaven, you hand over those lovely intelligences of yours and their subsidiary gods to slavery, and you condemn them to the treadmill. Why, Atlas himself would have long ago dropped the sky off his shoulders to its destruction if, while he panted and sweated under such a weight, he had not been soothed by the sweet ecstasy of that song. And the Dolphin, tired of the stars, if he had not been consumed by the thought of how far the vocal orbs of heaven surpass the sweetness of Arion's<sup>6</sup> lyre, would long ago have preferred his native ocean to the skies. Why, it is quite credible that the lark herself soars up into the clouds at dawn and that the nightingale passes the night in solitary trilling in order to harmonize their songs with that heavenly music to which they studiously listen.

Hence arose also that primeval story<sup>7</sup> that the Muses dance day and night before Jove's altar; and hence comes that ancient attribution of skill with the lyre to Apollo. Hence reverend antiquity believed Harmonia to be the daughter of Jove and Electra, and at her marriage with Cadmus it was said that all heaven's chorus sang.<sup>8</sup> What though no one on earth has ever heard that symphony of the stars? Is that ground for believing that everything beyond the moon's sphere is absolutely mute and numb with torpid silence? On the contrary, let us blame our own impotent ears, which cannot catch the songs or are unworthy to hear such sweet strains. But this celestial melody

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Spenser's allusion to the myth of Arion in *Amoretti* xxxviii, 1-4:  
 Arion, when, through tempests cruel wracke,  
 He forth was thrown into the greedy seas,  
 Through the sweet music which his harp did make  
 Allur'd a dolphin him from death to ease.

The dolphin's reward was a place in the skies as the constellation of the dolphin, which is near the sign of Capricorn.

<sup>7</sup> Hesiod's *Theogony* opens with the story of the birth of the Muses and of their eternal dance and song before the altar of Jove. Cf. *P.L.* I, 6, note.

<sup>8</sup> Diodorus Siculus (*Historical Library* V, 49) tells the myth of the heavenly chorus at the wedding of Harmonia. In *Mythologiae* IX, xiv, Natale Conti interprets the story as an allegory of the Pythagorean doctrine of the music of the spheres.

is not absolutely unheard; for who, O Aristotle, would think those 'goats'<sup>9</sup> of yours would skip in the mid region of the air unless they cannot resist the impulse to dance when they so plainly hear the music of the neighboring heavens?

But Pythagoras alone of mortals is said to have heard this harmony,<sup>10</sup>—unless he was a good genius or a denizen of the sky who perhaps was sent down by some ordinance of the gods to imbue the minds of men with divine knowledge and to recall them to righteousness. At least, he surely was a man who possessed every kind of virtue, who was worthy to consort with the gods themselves, whom he resembled, and to enjoy celestial society. And so I do not wonder that the gods, who loved him very much, permitted him to enter into the most mysterious secrets of nature.

Our impotence to hear this harmony seems to be a consequence of the insolence of the robber, Prometheus,<sup>11</sup> which brought so many evils upon men, and at the same time deprived us of that felicity which we shall never be permitted to enjoy as long as we wallow in sin and are brutalized by our animal desires. For how can we, whose spirits, as Persius says,<sup>12</sup> are warped earthward, and are defective in every heavenly element, be sensitive to that celestial sound? If our hearts were as pure, as chaste, as snowy as Pythagoras' was, our ears would resound and be filled with that supremely lovely music of the wheeling stars. Then indeed all things would seem to return to the age of gold. Then we should be immune to pain, and we should

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<sup>9</sup> Aristotle's *Meteorologica* I, 4, 341b, describes the combustible exhalations of the earth and sea as being sometimes ignited by movements of the atmosphere, and as then producing shooting stars or other phenomena which the Greeks called "goats" or "torches."

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Arcades*, 63-9, note.

<sup>11</sup> In *Theogony*, 564-616 Hesiod tells the story of Prometheus' theft of fire from Zeus and of his deception of Zeus about his claim on men for sacrifice, with at least a suggestion that the subsequent punishment of mankind by the evils which were sent down in Pandora's box was an allegory of the evils brought upon civilization by the development of the arts. Here Milton was probably thinking of a famous allusion to the myth of Prometheus by Horace in *Odes* I, iii.

<sup>12</sup> In *Satires* II, 61, this exclamation interrupts Persius' diatribe on the perversity and selfishness of most prayers to the gods.

enjoy the blessing of a peace that the gods themselves might envy.

But now the hour cuts me short in mid-career, and very fortunately too, for I am afraid that by my rough and inharmonious style I have all along been clashing with this very harmony which I am proclaiming, and that I myself have impeded your hearing of it. And so I shut up.

### *VII. Delivered in the College Chapel in Defence of Learning*

## LEARNING MAKES MEN HAPPIER THAN IGNORANCE

Milton first protests against being obliged to interrupt his serious studies to debate a threadbare proposition, but he congratulates himself on having been allotted the defense of Learning rather than that of Ignorance. Its champion, he observes, cannot open his mouth without inconsistency, for he cannot speak without making use of rhetoric and logic, arts of which Ignorance knows nothing. Then he begins the defense of Learning by arguing that the human mind is divine and can realize its divinity only by living the contemplative life of the scholar. He regards contemplation, here as he does in *Il Penseroso*, as the complete and satisfying discipline of the mind and will as Marsilio Ficino and many other Italian Neoplatonists had defined it.<sup>1</sup>

It is a fact, Gentlemen, universally understood and acknowledged, I think, that though the mighty Builder of the universe made all other things transient and perishable, he mingled with man's nature, beside its mortal part, a certain breath of divinity, as it were a part of himself—immortal, inextinguishable, and proof against death and annihilation. It was destined, after wandering for a time on earth in innocence and purity, like some celestial visitor, to fly upward to its native heaven, and return to its proper home and the land of its birth. Therefore

<sup>1</sup> For a good, brief discussion of the contemplative principle in Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, see Nesca Robb, *Neoplatonism in the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 68 ff. .

nothing can rightly be considered as contributing to our happiness unless it somehow looks both to that everlasting life as well as to our life as citizens of this world. Contemplation is by almost universal consent the only means whereby the mind can set itself free from the support of the body and concentrate its powers for the unbelievable delight of participating in the life of the immortal gods. Yet without learning, the mind is quite sterile and unhappy, and amounts to nothing. For who can rightly observe and consider the *ιδέας*<sup>2</sup> of things human and divine, about which he can know almost nothing, unless his spirit has been enriched and cultivated by learning and discipline? So the man who knows nothing of the liberal arts seems to be cut off from all access to the happy life—unless God's supreme desire was that we should struggle to the heights of knowledge of those things for which he has planted such a burning passion in our minds at birth. He would seem to have acted vainly or malevolently in giving us a spirit capable and insatiably curious of this high wisdom. Scrutinize the face of all the world in whatever way you can. The Builder of this great work has made it for his own glory. The more deeply we search into its marvelous plan, into this vast structure with its magnificent variety—something which only Learning permits us to do—the more we honor its Creator with our admiration and follow him with our praise. In doing so we may be securely confident that we please Him. Can we suppose, gentlemen, that the sweep of so vast a sky, which is marked and illuminated by eternal lights, sustains so many swiftly and intricately revolving bodies, merely to give light to ignorant and sluggish men, and to be torch-bearers to us below, the lazy and slothful? Can we suppose that there is nothing more in the fruits and herbs that grow so abundantly than their frail green beauty? If we are to value these things so unworthily as to perceive nothing more in them than brute sensation reveals, we shall seem to act not only vilely and basely,

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<sup>2</sup> The Greek spelling stresses the allusion to Plato's *ideas* of ideally perfect forms, to which all that we know by experience and reflection imperfectly corresponds.



but unjustly and wickedly toward that gracious spirit whom our indifference and ingratitude rob both of much of His glory and of the veneration due to His power. So then, if learning is our leader and director in our quest for happiness, and if it has the approval of the Almighty and contributes to his praise, it surely cannot fail to make its followers happy in the very noblest way.

I do not forget, Gentlemen, that the contemplative way which leads to all that is supremely desirable, can give us no taste of true happiness without integrity in our lives and purity in our conduct. I remember the wicked characters of many men famous for their learning, who were quarrelsome, vindictive, and enslaved by base passions: and I also remember that many men of no education have proved to be honorable and upright. What does this mean? Is Ignorance the more blessed? Certainly not! The fact is, Gentlemen, that though some few outstanding scholars may have been corrupted by the bad morals of their country and the vulgarity of ignorant men, yet the illiterate masses have often been held to their duty by the efforts of a single learned and wise man. Indeed a single family or a single individual, if he possesses knowledge and discretion, may seem as if he were a gift of God endowed with power to make a whole nation virtuous. But where learning has been starved and scholarship has been exterminated, there you find no trace of any good man, and savagery and frightful barbarity run riot. As an instance of this I will not mention any particular state or province or tribe, but rather all Europe, which is a fourth part of the whole world. There several centuries ago all the liberal arts had perished, and the Muses who preside over them now, had abandoned the universities of that time. A blind inertia possessed and pervaded everything. In the schools nothing except the absurd dogmas of the doddering monks was heard, and the insulting and ugly master, Ignorance, put on the gown and strutted on our empty platforms and in our lecture-desks and the forsaken chairs of the professors. Then for the first time Piety was in mourning, and Religion languished and weakened so that only very

recently and very feebly did she begin to recover from her deadly wound.

Truly, Gentlemen, it has long been a well enough established principle in philosophy that the mastery of every art and science belongs to the intellect alone, while the home and shrine of the virtues of righteousness is the Will. By universal consent, the human intellect not only shines forth as the prince and ruler of the other faculties of the soul, but its radiance also directs and illuminates the otherwise blind and fumbling Will, which, like the moon, shines with a borrowed light. So let us willingly grant and confess that Virtue without Learning is more favorable to the happy life than Learning without Virtue. But once the two are happily united, as they surely ought to be, and as they very often are, then Learning lifts her head and instantly shines out so as to appear by far the superior. She takes her high seat beside the royal and ruling Intellect, and from there she looks down upon the doings of the Will as something far beneath her feet. And then she readily claims for herself an excellence, glory, and majesty akin to that of God himself forever.

Descending now to our life as citizens of this world, let us see what Learning and Ignorance are worth respectively in public and private life. I shall ignore the fact that Learning is youth's finest ornament, the strong support of the prime of life, and the consolation of old age. I shall make no point of the fact that, after careers full of achievement and glory, many of the men who have been most honored by their contemporaries and many of the most eminent of the Romans withdrew from the conflict and hurlyburly of ambition to literary studies, as to a harbor and a delightful retreat. Clearly, those fine old veterans understood that, because the part of life remaining to them was the best, it should be used to the best purpose. They were already the foremost among men, and by means of those studies they intended not to be the last among the gods. Fame had once been their goal, now it was immortality. In their struggles against the foes of the Empire they fought a very different fight, but when they were to fight

against death, the greatest curse of humanity—see what weapons they chose, what forces they recruited, and with what resources they equipped themselves.

But it is a fact that the great bulk of the world's happiness consists in human relationships and the development of friendships. According to a widespread complaint, many men of the more learned kind are unapproachable, rude, queer, and possessing none of the graces of persuasive speech. I confess that the man who shuts himself up and is almost entirely immured in study, is readier to talk with the gods than with men, either because he is habitually at home among celestial affairs and is unfamiliar and really strange among mortal ones, or because a mind which has been enlarged by the steady pursuit of divine interests is irked by physical constraints and disqualified for the more formal social amenities. But if good friendships of the right kind come into his way, no one is more loyal than he. And what is more pleasant—what can be imagined more delightful than the talks of learned and serious men together—such, for example, as the divine Plato is said to have often had under that famous plane tree?<sup>3</sup> Certainly they deserved that all mankind should listen to them in rapt silence. But stupid talk or what goes on among those who encourage one another in extravagance and debauchery, is the friendship of ignorance, or, rather, it is ignorance of what friendship is.

Again, if the happiness of the life that we live among men consists in the mind's honest and liberal pleasure, then the delights that are the secret of study and learning as such easily surpass all others. How much it means to grasp all the principles of the heavens and their stars, all the movements and disturbances of the atmosphere, both its awful fulmination of thunder and the blaze of its comets,<sup>4</sup> which terrify dull minds,

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<sup>3</sup> Milton is thinking of the plane tree under which Socrates and Phaedrus sit down for their famous conversation about friendship. Cf. Plato's *Phaedrus*, 229A.

<sup>4</sup> In a contemporary work such as Zanchius' *On the Creation (De operibus Dei* III, i-ii) Milton might have found the Aristotelian theory

and also its freezing into snow and hail, and its soft and gentle precipitation of dew and rain. How much it means to get an insight into the fluctuating winds and the exhalations and gases which the earth and sea emit,<sup>5</sup> and—if it be possible—into the nature and the sensory experience of every living creature, and hence into the delicate anatomy of the human body and into its medical treatment, and—finally—into the divine powers and faculties of the spirit, and whatever knowledge may be accessible to us about the beings that are called household gods and genii and daemons. Beside these there are countless other subjects, many of which might be mastered in less time than I should need to name them all.

So at last, Gentlemen, when the cycle of universal knowledge has been completed, still the spirit will be restless in our dark imprisonment here, and it will rove about until the bounds of creation itself no longer limit the divine magnificence of its quest. Then most happenings and events about us will become obvious so quickly that almost nothing can happen without warning or by accident to a man who is in possession of the stronghold of wisdom. Truly he will seem to have the stars under his control and dominion, land and sea at his command, and the winds and storms submissive to his will. Mother Nature herself has surrendered to him. It is as if some god had abdicated the government of the world and committed its justice, laws, and administration to him as ruler.

And besides all this, how great an additional pleasure of the mind it is to take our flight over all the history and regions of the world, to view the conditions and changes of kingdoms, nations, cities, and people—all with a view to improving our wisdom and our morals. This is the way to live in all the epochs of history, Gentlemen, and to be a contemporary of time itself. And while we are looking forward to the future glory of our name, this will also be the way to extend life backward from the womb and to extort from unwilling Fate a

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that comets are formed by the sun's action in the upper air from dense, dry, and warm exhalations from the earth.

<sup>5</sup> Compare *Il Penseroso*, 93-96 and 170-174.

kind of immortality in the past. And shall I ignore a satisfaction to which no parallel can be found? To be the oracle of many peoples, to have one's home become a shrine, to be the object of invitations from kings and commonwealths and of visits from neighbours and distant foreigners, and of pride for still others who will boast it an honorable distinction merely to have had a single glimpse of one. These are the rewards of study and the profits that learning can and often does bring to those who cultivate her in private life.

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Milton goes on to survey the value of learning to public men, mentioning Lyncurgus in this connection as he does in *Of Education*, referring in a conventional way to the education of Alexander the Great and Augustus Caesar, and contrasting the ancient Greeks with the barbarous, contemporary Turks, and stressing the importance of culture in the development of primitive societies.

Ignorance, he is now ready to say, has been worsted in the debate, though his audience may be too lazy or dissipated or valetudinarian to admit that life is too short and art too long for idleness. If they would only abide by the rules of health and devote themselves to study, they would soon be amazed at the sweeping success of their voyage across the ocean of learning. He goes on:

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Our voyage also may be notably shortened if we but know what subjects to study and how to pick out the useful things in them. In the first place, how much contemptible nonsense there is from the grammarians and teachers of composition. When the former teach their art, they talk like barbarians, and the latter talk like infants. What about logic? If she were treated as she deserves, she would indeed be queen of the sciences—but alas, how much absurdity is reason responsible for! In this field there are no human beings; there are only thorn-finches stuffing themselves with thistles and briars.

O reapers with iron bowels!<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> O dura messorum ilia. Horace, *Epodes* III, 4.

And what shall I say about the art which the Aristotelians call metaphysics? It is not an art, I say, though the authority of great men would persuade me to accept it as a most valuable one. It is rather a scandalous reef<sup>7</sup> and a bog of sophistry, which has been contrived to bring men to shipwreck and ruin. These are the evils of that gowned ignorance to which I have already referred. This is the disease for whose spread even into natural philosophy the monks were responsible far and wide. Even the mathematicians suffer from the foolish vanity of their demonstrations. When all these unprofitable subjects have been brought into the contempt which they deserve and abolished, the number of whole years that we shall save will astound us.

Another point! Our legal science particularly suffers from the confusion of our system and—still worse—from a jargon that I can hardly tell how to describe. It may be the gibberish of American Indians, and it may not be human speech at all. Often when I have heard our shysters bawling in this lingo, I have wondered whether those who had neither human mouths nor human powers of speech,<sup>8</sup> could have any human feelings inside them. I am positively afraid that Justice in her sanctity cannot bear to look upon us<sup>9</sup> and will never heed the grievances and wrongs of men whose language she does not know how to speak.

So, Gentlemen, if from childhood up we never let a day pass without its assignment and without some hard work, and if we wisely keep our studies clear of everything that is impertinent, superfluous, or insignificant, we are certain before we reach the age of Alexander the Great to have mastered something finer and more magnificent than the world that he conquered. And we shall be so far from protesting against the shortness of life and the tediousness of art that we shall

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. the *Rocke of Reproach* of Guyon's voyage in *The Faerie Queene* II, xii, 9, 9.

<sup>8</sup> Compare Milton's jibe at the language of the courts in *Elegy* I, 31-2.

<sup>9</sup> Milton thought of the myth of the departure of Justice or Astraea from earth, where she had lived among men during the Golden Age of Saturn's reign. Cf. *The Faerie Queene* V, i, 5.

rather be ready, I think, to weep and shed tears, as he did long ago, because there are no more worlds left for us to conquer.

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The conclusion of the address recalls the faith in the future of the universe which Milton expresses in his Latin poem, *Nature is not Subject to Old Age*. He argues that Ignorance can no more be justified by the plea that the approaching end of all things will disappoint Learning's hope of immortality than it can by the human propensity to drink the cup of Circe, which he treats as a symbol like the cup of Circe's son in *Comus*. Then he goes on, in a passage which recalls the edifying prefaces of some of the Renaissance editions of the works of Aristotle and Pliny on natural history, to point out that even the birds and beasts teach us lessons of industry by applying the principles of natural science to their lives. His conclusion is a reminder to his hearers that they should learn from the myth of the response of the plants and animals to Orpheus' music, that men should not be behindhand in responding to the liberal learning of which that music is the symbol. Then, with an apology for having allowed the interest of the subject to lead him into so long an harangue, he sets his audience free.

## OF EDUCATION

*To Master Samuel Hartlib.<sup>1</sup>*

Master Hartlib,

I AM long since persuaded that to say or do aught worth memory and imitation, no purpose or respect should sooner move us than simply the love of God and of mankind. Nevertheless to write now the reforming of education, though it be one of the greatest and noblest designs that can be thought on, and for the want whereof this nation perishes, I had not yet at this time been induced but by your earnest entreaties and serious conjurements; as having my mind for the present half diverted in the pursuance of some other assertions, the knowledge and the use of which cannot but be a great furtherance both to the enlargement of truth and honest living, with much more peace. Nor should the laws of any private friendship have prevailed with me to divide thus, or transpose my former thoughts, but that I see those aims, those actions, which have won you with me the esteem of a person sent hither by some good providence from a far country to be the occasion and the incitement of great good<sup>2</sup> to this island.

And, as I hear, you have obtained the same repute with men of most approved wisdom, and some of the highest authority among us; not to mention the learned correspondence which you hold in foreign parts, and the extraordinary pains and diligence which you have used in this matter, both here and

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<sup>1</sup> Some facts about Samuel Hartlib (1600?-1662) and some reasons for supposing that his responsibility for the publication of this tract may not have been so great as Milton's will be found in the Introduction, 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the Civil War Hartlib went on with his projects for the reform of agriculture and the encouragement of natural science. The diarist, John Evelyn, who visited his collection of mechanical contrivances on 27 November, 1665, described him as a "master of innumerable curiosities and very communicative."



beyond the seas; either by the definite will of God so ruling, or the peculiar sway of nature,<sup>3</sup> which also is God's working. Neither can I think that, so reputed and so valued as you are, you would, to the forfeit of your own discerning ability, impose upon me an unfit and overponderous argument; but that the satisfaction which you profess to have received from those incidental discourses which we have wandered into, hath pressed and almost constrained you into a persuasion that what you require from me in this point, I neither ought nor can in conscience defer beyond this time both of so much need at once, and so much opportunity to try what God hath determined.

I will not resist therefore whatever it is either of divine or human obligation that you lay upon me; but will forthwith set down in writing, as you request me, that voluntary idea<sup>4</sup> which hath long in silence presented itself to me, of a better education, in extent and comprehension far more large, and yet of time far shorter, and of attainment far more certain, than hath been yet in practice. Brief I shall endeavour to be; for that which I have to say, assuredly this nation hath extreme need should be done sooner than spoken. To tell you therefore what I have benefited herein among old renowned authors, I shall spare; and to search what many modern Januas<sup>5</sup> and Didactics, more than ever I shall read, have projected, my inclination leads me not. But if you can accept of these few

<sup>3</sup> *sway of nature*: as opposed to the "extraordinary providence" of God, or the power to work miracles, which Milton said in *Christian Doctrine* I, viii, is "too frequently described by the name of nature; for nature cannot possibly mean anything but the mysterious power and efficacy of that divine voice which went forth in the beginning, and to which, as to a perpetual command, all things have since paid obedience."

<sup>4</sup> As Mr. Herbert Agar suggests (*Milton and Plato*, p. 66), Milton's italicization of the word *Idea* in the first edition implies that it had a Platonic connotation. Milton is undertaking to defend an ideal like the ideals of justice which Plato defended in the *Republic* and *Laws*. Cf. notes 26, 36, and 95 below.

<sup>5</sup> The allusion to the *Janua* or *Door to Latin* of the Moravian educator and bishop, John Amos Comenius (1592-1671), and to his *Great Didactic*, seems certain. Milton may also have been familiar with the *Janua Linguarum* of William Bateus and Elias Bodinus of the Jesuit College at Salamanca, to which Comenius was somewhat indebted.

observations which have flowered off, and are as it were the burnishing of many studious and contemplative years altogether spent in the search of religious and civil knowledge, and such as pleased you so well in the relating, I here give you them to dispose of.

The end then of learning is to repair the ruins<sup>6</sup> of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which, being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection.<sup>7</sup> But because our understanding cannot in this body found itself but on sensible things, nor arrive so clearly to the knowledge of God and things invisible as by orderly conning over the visible and inferior creature, the same method is necessarily to be followed in all discreet teaching. And seeing every nation affords not experience and tradition enough for all kinds of learning, therefore we are chiefly taught the languages of those people who have at any time been most industrious after wisdom; so that language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known. And though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into yet, if he have not studied the solid things in them as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only.

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<sup>6</sup> Like Bacon in the opening pages of *The Dignity and Advancement of Learning*, Milton assumed that by Adam's fall men lost perfection in intellectual and scientific gifts as well as moral perfection. "Now our understanding being eclipsed, as well as our tempers infirmed," wrote Sir Thomas Browne in *Vulgar Errors* I, v, "we must betake ourselves to wayes of reparation, and depend upon the illumination of our endeavours. For thus we may in some measure repair our primary ruines, and build ourselves Men again." Cf. Introduction #6.

<sup>7</sup> *Perfection*, here, refers to the nation as well as to individuals, for Milton thought of educational reform as a final step in the Puritan revolution, or—as John Hall called it in *An Humble Motion to the Parliament of England Concerning the Advancement of Learning and Reformation of the Universities* (1649), p. 21—"this last piece of Reformation, which will embalme your memories, and leave almost nothing to your Successours to doe piously and justly."

Hence appear the many mistakes which have made learning generally so unpleasing and so unsuccessful; first, we do amiss to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latin and Greek as might be learned otherwise easily and delightfully in one year. And that which casts our proficiency therein so much behind, is our time lost partly in too oft idle vacancies<sup>8</sup> given both to schools and universities, partly in a preposterous<sup>9</sup> exaction, forcing the empty wits of children to compose themes, verses and orations, which are the acts of ripest judgment, and the final work of a head filled by long reading and observing with elegant maxims and copious invention. These are not matters to be wrung from poor striplings, like blood out of the nose, or the plucking of untimely fruit: besides the ill habit which they get of wretched barbarizing<sup>10</sup> against the Latin and Greek idiom with their untutored Anglicisms, odious to be read, yet not to be avoided without a well-continued and judicious conversing<sup>11</sup> among pure authors digested, which they scarce taste. Whereas, if after some preparatory grounds of speech by their certain forms got into memory, they were led to the praxis<sup>12</sup> thereof in some chosen short book lessoned thoroughly to them, they might then forthwith proceed to learn the substance of good things, and arts in due order, which would bring the whole language quickly into their power. This I take to be the most rational

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<sup>8</sup> *vacancies*: holidays and festivals as well as the long vacations which Milton proposes to use for military training and scientific field work.

<sup>9</sup> *preposterous*: wrongly reversed in order. So the practical school-master, John Brinsley, in *Ludus Literarius* (p. 174), condemned the premature theme-writing which made boys "live in a continuall horror and hatred of learning; and to account the school, not *Ludus literarius*, but *carneficina*, or *pistrinum literarium*" (not a literary playground but a literary torture-chamber). Yet Brinsley went on to discuss the proper study of the art of rhetoric so as to develop the faculty of invention by furnishing the "schollers with all store of the choisest matter, that they may thereby learn to understand, speak, or write of any ordinary Theame, Morall or Politicall."

<sup>10</sup> *barbarizing*: perpetrating barbarisms, writing unidiomatic Latin.

<sup>11</sup> *conversing among*: getting familiar experience of. Cf. Introduction,

#7.

<sup>12</sup> *praxis*: practical application.

and most profitable way of learning languages, and whereby we may best hope to give account to God of our youth spent herein.

And for the usual method of teaching arts,<sup>13</sup> I deem it to be an old error of universities not yet well recovered from the scholastic grossness of barbarous ages, that instead of beginning with arts most easy—and those be such as are most obvious to the sense—they present their young unmatriculated<sup>14</sup> novices, at first coming, with the most intellective<sup>15</sup> abstractions of logic<sup>16</sup> and metaphysics. So that they having but newly left those grammatic flats and shallows where they stuck unreasonably to learn a few words with lamentable construction, and now on the sudden transported under another climate to be tossed and turmoiled with their unballasted wits in fathomless and unquiet deeps of controversy, do for the most part grow into hatred and contempt of learning, mocked and deluded all this while with ragged notions and babblements, while they expected worthy and delightful knowledge; till poverty or youthful years<sup>17</sup> call them importunately their several ways, and hasten them with the sway of friends either to an ambitious and mercenary, or ignorantly zealous divinity:<sup>18</sup> some allured to the trade of law, grounding their purposes not on

<sup>13</sup> *arts*: the traditional fields of study or "Seven Liberal Arts" had consisted of Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy and Music; but Greek and Hebrew had won a place beside Latin in the sixteenth century, and there was some recognition in Oxford and Cambridge of the natural sciences for which Milton pleads in his third *Oratorical Performance*. See also p. 25 above.

<sup>14</sup> *unmatriculated*: inexperienced in the ways and studies of the universities.

<sup>15</sup> *intellective*: comprehensible only by intellectual effort, in which the imagination and senses play the smallest possible part.

<sup>16</sup> For the character and motives of the Puritan stress upon logic see Perry Miller's *The New England Mind*, chapter iv. The reasons for Milton's reaction against traditional Aristotelian dialectic in the schools are sketched in the Introduction, #1-4.

<sup>17</sup> *youthful years*: unsettled youth's haste to get away from the inaction of study.

<sup>18</sup> Milton's *Considerations touching the likeliest means to remove Hirelings out of the Church* was the final expression of his concern over the financial motive in the profession of divinity (1659). Compare *Reason of Church Government* I, v.

the prudent<sup>19</sup> and heavenly contemplation of justice and equity which was never taught them, but on the promising and pleasing thoughts of litigious terms, fat contentions, and flowing fees; others betake them to state affairs with souls so unprincipled in virtue and true generous breeding that flattery and court-shifts and tyrannous aphorisms<sup>20</sup> appear to them the highest points of wisdom; instilling their barren hearts with a conscientious slavery,<sup>21</sup> if, as I rather think, it be not feigned. Others, lastly, of a more delicious and airy<sup>22</sup> spirit, retire themselves—knowing no better—to the enjoyments of ease and luxury, living out their days in feast and jollity; which indeed is the wisest and the safest course of all these, unless they were with more integrity undertaken. And these are the errors and these are the fruits of misspending our prime youth at the schools and universities as we do, either in learning mere words, or such things chiefly as were better unlearned.

I shall detain you now no longer in the demonstration of what we should not do, but straight conduct ye to a hillside, where I will point ye out the right path of a virtuous and noble education; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus<sup>23</sup> was not more charming. I doubt not but ye shall have more ado to drive our dullest and laziest youth, our stocks and stubs,<sup>24</sup> from the infinite desire of such a happy nurture, than we have now to hale and drag our choicest and hopefullest wits to that asinine feast<sup>25</sup> of sowthistles and brambles which is commonly set before them as all the food and entertainment of their tenderest

<sup>19</sup> *prudent*: wise in jurisprudence, or the philosophy of law.

<sup>20</sup> *tyrannous aphorisms*: specious epigrams justifying absolute power for kings.

<sup>21</sup> *conscientious slavery*: servility based upon a perverted sense of loyalty to the king.

<sup>22</sup> *delicious and airy*: pleasure-loving and superficial.

<sup>23</sup> Horace tells us in the *Art of Poetry* (391–6) that even in ancient times the charming of the rocks and trees and savage beasts by Orpheus' lyre was regarded as a symbolic myth of the forces of civilization at work.

<sup>24</sup> *stubs*: blockheads.

<sup>25</sup> *asinine feast*: compare the attack on "thorny lectures of monkish and miserable sophistry" in the universities in *C.G.* I, ii.

and most docible age. I call therefore a complete and generous education<sup>26</sup> that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war. And how all this may be done between twelve and one and twenty, less time than is now bestowed in pure trifling at grammar and sophistry, is to be thus ordered.

First, to find out a spacious house and ground about it fit for an academy, and big enough to lodge a hundred and fifty persons, whereof twenty or thereabout may be attendants, all under the government of one, who shall be thought of desert sufficient, and ability either to do all or wisely to direct and oversee it done. This place should be at once both school and university, not needing a remove to any other house of scholarship, except it be some peculiar college of law or physic, where they mean to be practitioners; but as for those general studies which take up all our time from Lily<sup>27</sup> to the commencing, as they term it, master of art, it should be absolute. After this pattern, as many edifices may be converted to this use as shall be needful in every city throughout this land, which would tend much to the increase of learning and civility<sup>28</sup> everywhere. This number, less or more thus collected, to the convenience of a foot company, or interchangeably two troops of cavalry, should divide their day's work into three parts, as it lies orderly: their studies, their exercise, and their diet.

For their studies: first, they should begin with the chief and necessary rules of some good grammar, <sup>29</sup> either that now used, or any better; and while this is doing, their speech is to be

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<sup>26</sup> In defining education here Milton consciously echoed Plato's *Laws* (I, 643) and the opening of Quintilian's work on the training of public speakers, *Institutio oratoria*; but the idea was familiar also in contemporary books. John Dury's *Reformed School* (1649?) sought to make "good Commonwealths men," apt in "husbandry, trade, navigation, administration, in peace and in war." Professor E. N. S. Thompson notes that as early as 1555 a gentleman was defined in an anonymous *Institution of a Gentleman* as "a man fit for the wars and fit for the peace."

<sup>27</sup> Lily was the ordinary way of referring to the *Beginning Book in Latin* by the first headmaster of St. Paul's School, William Lily (1468?-1522). For centuries it was constantly reedited. Cf. Introduction, #7.

<sup>28</sup> *civility*: a civilized level of culture.

<sup>29</sup> *grammar*: a Latin grammar, presumably Lily's.

fashioned to a distinct and clear pronounciation,<sup>30</sup> as near as may be to the Italian,<sup>31</sup> especially in the vowels. For we Englishmen, being far northerly, do not open our mouths in the cold air wide enough to grace a southern tongue, but are observed by all other nations to speak exceeding close and inward; so that to smatter<sup>32</sup> Latin with an English mouth is as ill a hearing as law French. Next, to make them expert in the usefulest points of grammar, and withal to season them and win them early to the love of virtue and true labor, ere any flattering seducement or vain principle seize them wandering, some easy and delightful book of education would be read to them, whereof the Greeks have store; as Cebes,<sup>33</sup> Plutarch, and other Socratic discourses.<sup>34</sup> But in Latin we have none of classic authority extant, except the two or three first books of Quintilian,<sup>35</sup> and some select pieces elsewhere.

<sup>30</sup> John Brinsley, who was as much interested in teaching boys to pronounce English as he was in training them to pronounce Latin "naturally and sweetly, without vain affectation," held that from childhood they should be "taught to pronounce everything audibly, leasurely, distinctly." (*Ludus Literarius*, pp. 50-1.)

<sup>31</sup> Milton expressed his passion for correctly pronounced Italian in a plea to his friend, Benedetto Bonmattei (*Familiar Letters*, 8) to add a section on phonetics to his Italian grammar. Milton stood almost alone in recommending the Italian pronunciation for Latin.

<sup>32</sup> *smatter*: to talk ignorantly.

<sup>33</sup> The *Table* of Cebes is a formal description of an allegorical picture representing the birth of children into the world and their ascent of the steep path which leads through various temptations to self-controlled maturity. Though it was probably written by the Stoic Cebes (first century A.D.), it was accepted as the work of Cebes the Theban, who talks movingly about death with Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo* and offers in the *Crito* (45b) to pay his ransom. The *Table* was familiar in a stream of editions which began with the Aldine of 1512. Usually the Greek original faced a Latin translation and was followed by the Golden Verses of Pythagoras, the Sermon on the Mount or other edifying matter.

<sup>34</sup> The essays (*Moralia*) of Plutarch (46?-120? A.D.) were no less familiar than the *Parallel Lives of the Greeks and Romans*. By the term "Socratic discourses" several of them may be intended, and Milton must have thought particularly of the essay *On the Education of Children*, which was turned into Latin by Guarino, and into English by Sir Thomas Eliot. Since 1603 Philemon Holland's translation of the *Moralia* had made them as familiar as the *Lives* had been made by Sir Thomas North's translation. Cf. Introduction, #13.

<sup>35</sup> The influence of the *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian (30?-96? A.D.)

But here the main skill and groundwork will be to temper them such lectures and explanations upon every opportunity as may lead and draw them in willing obedience, inflamed with the study of learning and the admiration of virtue—stirred up with high hopes of living to be brave men and worthy patriots, dear to God and famous to all ages; that they may despise and scorn all their childish and ill taught qualities to delight in manly and liberal exercises, which he who hath the art and proper eloquence to catch them with, what with mild and effectual persuasions and what with the intimation of some fear, if need be, but chiefly by his own example, might in a short space gain them to an incredible diligence and courage, infusing into their young breasts such an ingenuous and noble ardor, as would not fail to make many of them renowned and matchless men. At the same time, some other hour of the day, might be taught them the rules of arithmetic, and soon after the elements of geometry, even playing,<sup>36</sup> as the old manner was. After evening repast, till bedtime their thoughts will be best taken up in the easy grounds of religion and the story of scripture.

The next step would be to the authors of agriculture, Cato,<sup>37</sup> Varro, and Columella, for the matter is most easy; and, if the language be difficult, so much the better—it is not a difficulty above their years. And here will be an occasion of inciting and enabling them hereafter to improve the tillage of their country, to recover the bad soil and to remedy the waste that is made of good; for this was one of Hercules' praises.<sup>38</sup> Ere half these

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upon *Of Education* is indicated in the Introduction, #11, and in notes 26 and 36.

<sup>36</sup> *playing*: Milton remembered Socrates' advice in the seventh book of Plato's *Republic* that boys should be trained as far as possible to regard their studies as play. In geometry and mathematics generally Quintilian (*Institutio* I, x, 39) stresses Plato's principle, and English educators from Ascham to Brinsley tried to extend it to every branch of study.

<sup>37</sup> For the basis of Milton's interest in the *De re rustica* of Cato the Censor (234–149 B.C.), the books *Rerum Rusticarum* of Varro (116–27 B.C.), and the twelve books of Columella (first century A.D.) *De re rustica*, see Introduction, #8.

<sup>38</sup> Natale Conti, perhaps the most popular of the interpreters of the classic myths to Renaissance Europe, says (*Mythologiae* VII, i) that the best known of many interpretations of the various labors of Hercules is



authors be read (which will soon be with plying hard and daily) they cannot choose but be masters of any ordinary prose. So that it will be then seasonable for them to learn in any modern author the use of the globes and all the maps, first with the old names and then with the new; that they might be then capable to read any compendious method of natural philosophy.

And at the same time might be entering into the Greek tongue after the same manner as was before prescribed in the Latin; whereby the difficulties of grammar being soon overcome, all the historical physiology of Aristotle<sup>39</sup> and Theophrastus<sup>40</sup> are open before them, and, as I may say, under contribution. The like access will be to Vitruvius,<sup>41</sup> to Seneca's<sup>42</sup> *Natural Questions*, to Mela,<sup>43</sup> Celsus,<sup>44</sup> Pliny,<sup>45</sup> or Solinus.<sup>46</sup>

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that which treats his cleansing of the Augean stables as an enterprise in fertilizing land.

<sup>39</sup> For Milton's interest in such Aristotelian works as the *Natural History of Animals* see Introduction, #9.

<sup>40</sup> Milton mentions Theophrastus (372?-285 B.C.) because he was Aristotle's successor as leader of the Peripatetic School, and because his *Enquiry into Plants and Causes (or Growth) of Plants* were often included, at least in part, in editions of Aristotle's works, as they were in the Aldine edition of 1498.

<sup>41</sup> Milton's contemporaries took an active interest in the work of Vitruvius Pollio (late first century B.C.), *De architectura*, which treated all kinds of construction problems and devoted its last book to military machines. Cf. Introduction, #8.

<sup>42</sup> In spite of its low scientific value as a mere compilation from earlier works, the *Natural Questions* of Lucius Annaeus Seneca (8? B.C.-65 A.D.) was much valued, perhaps because one of its main interests was astronomical. Cf. Introduction, #9.

<sup>43</sup> For Pomponius Mela (first century A.D.) see Introduction, #8.

<sup>44</sup> Aulus Cornelius Celsus (first century A.D.) wrote an encyclopedic work, *Artes*, books VI-XIII of which were long a standard compendium of medical science. They included the first important treatment of surgery, and their discussion of pharmacy won them a place under the caption "Flowers of Celsus" in an anonymous *Enchiridion Medicum* as late as 1619.

<sup>45</sup> The *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder (23?-79 A.D.), in Holland's widely known translation, if not in the original Latin, was familiar to every educated Englishman. Its great scope and genuine scientific purpose did not suffer in the judgment of Milton's contemporaries on account of the "unnatural natural history" which is the only feature of the work that is generally known today.

<sup>46</sup> Elizabethan interest in Caius Julius Solinus (third century A.D.) was

And having thus passed the principles of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and geography, with a general compact of physics, they may descend in mathematics to the instrumental science of trigonometry, and from thence to fortification, architecture, enginery,<sup>47</sup> or navigation. And in natural philosophy they may proceed leisurely from the history of meteors, minerals, plants, and living creatures, as far as anatomy.

Then also in course might be read to them out of some not tedious writer the institution of physic,<sup>48</sup> that they may know the tempers, the humors,<sup>49</sup> the seasons,<sup>50</sup> and how to manage a crudity;<sup>51</sup> which he who can wisely and timely do, is not only a great physician to himself and to his friends, but also may at some time or other save an army by this frugal and expenseless means only, and not let the healthy and stout bodies of young men rot away under him for want of this discipline—which is a great pity, and no less a shame to the commander. To set forward all these proceedings in nature and mathematics, what hinders but that they may procure, as oft as shall be needful, the helpful experience of hunters, fowlers, fishermen, shepherds, gardeners, apothecaries; and in the other sciences, architects, engineers, mariners, anatomists; who doubtless would be ready, some for reward, and some to favor such a hopeful seminary. And this will give them such a real tincture of natural knowledge<sup>52</sup> as they shall never forget, but daily augment with delight. Then also those poets which are now counted most hard, will be both facile and pleasant: Orpheus,<sup>53</sup>

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strong enough for Arthur Golding to append a translation of his *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* to his version of Pomponius Mela, under the title *Of the Noble Actions of Human Creatures*.

<sup>47</sup> *enginery*: mechanics, engineering.

<sup>48</sup> *institution of physic*: instruction in medicine.

<sup>49</sup> *humors*: the traditional four fluid elements of the human body: blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy, whose varying combinations determined an individual's *temper* or physical and moral character. Cf. *P.L.* II, 218; V, 484; and XI, 544; *Comus*, 810; and *S.A.*, Preface and l. 600, especially the last two references.

<sup>50</sup> *seasons*: the effects of seasonal change upon the human body.

<sup>51</sup> *crudity*: fit of indigestion.

<sup>52</sup> *natural knowledge*: knowledge of natural science.

<sup>53</sup> Milton was not thinking of the *Orphic Hymns*. nor of the aspect of

Hesiod,<sup>54</sup> Theocritus,<sup>55</sup> Aratus,<sup>56</sup> Nicander,<sup>57</sup> Oppian,<sup>58</sup> Dionysius,<sup>59</sup> and, in Latin, Lucretius,<sup>60</sup> Manilius<sup>61</sup> and the rural part of Virgil.

By this time,<sup>62</sup> years and good general precepts will have furnished them more distinctly with that act of reason which in ethics is called *Proairesis*;<sup>63</sup> that they may with some judgment

Orpheus to which note 23 above refers, and with which he half associated himself in *Lycidas*, 59-63, and *P.L.* VII, 32-5. Here his reference seems to be to the *Lithica*, a poem on the magical properties of precious stones which was attributed to Orpheus.

<sup>54</sup> The *Works and Days* of Hesiod (late eighth century B.C.) were almost as much valued for their treatment of farm life as were Virgil's *Georgics* and *Eclogues*, to which Milton refers as his "rural part."

<sup>55</sup> Milton's admiration for the first of the pastoral idyls of Theocritus (early third century B.C.) is reflected in *Lycidas*. Cf. Introduction to *The Minor Poems*, #32.

<sup>56</sup> For Milton's interest in the *Phenomena* of Aratus (early third century B.C.) see Introduction, #9.

<sup>57</sup> The *Theriaca*, which treats of venomous creatures and the cures of their bites, and the *Alexipharmaca*, which treats of poisons and their antidotes, made Nicander (second century B.C.) one of the most interesting of ancient poets to many readers in the Renaissance.

<sup>58</sup> The *Halieutica* of Oppian (who seems to have been a Cilician living in the late second and early third century A.D.) was well known in the Latin translation of Laurentius Lippius (1478), which was reprinted several times in the sixteenth century. Its two first books are a somewhat unnatural natural history of fishes, and books III-V are a kind of *Complete Angler*.

<sup>59</sup> The *Periegesis* of Dionysius of Alexandria (early second century A.D.) is a systematic survey of the geography of the ancient world in just 1187 hexameter lines. Its popularity was due more to its brevity than to its poetic qualities. Cf. Introduction, #8.

<sup>60</sup> Milton's liberalism shows in his inclusion of the *De rerum natura* of Lucretius (Titus Lucretius Carus, 99?-55? B.C.), one of the boldest defenses of Epicurean ethics and materialistic cosmology, and perhaps the greatest didactic poem ever written. Cf. Introduction, #9.

<sup>61</sup> The *Astronomica* of Manilius (early first century A.D.) is a practical treatment of astronomy written in an age when the astrological aspect of that science could still be taken seriously. Milton may have been attracted by its defense of the Stoic doctrine of a World-Soul, and by its theory of the unequal distances of the fixed stars and of their essential resemblance to the sun.

<sup>62</sup> By this time Milton must indicate the end of the first three or four years of the course which was to begin at twelve and end at twenty.

<sup>63</sup> *Proairesis*, the term for intelligent choice between good and evil which Milton transliterates from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* II, iv, 3, suggests the entire Aristotelian conception of virtue as possible only

contemplate upon moral good and evil. Then will be required a special reinforcement of constant and sound indoctrinating to set them right and firm, instructing them more amply in the knowledge of virtue and the hatred of vice; while their young and pliant affections are led through all the moral works of Plato,<sup>64</sup> Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch, Laertius,<sup>65</sup> and those Locrian remnants;<sup>66</sup> but still to be reduced<sup>67</sup> in their nightward studies wherewith they close the day's work, under the determinate sentence<sup>68</sup> of David or Solomon, or the evangels and apostolic scriptures. Being perfect in the knowledge of personal duty, they may then begin the study of economics.<sup>69</sup> And either now or before this, they may have easily learned at any odd hour the Italian tongue. And soon after, but with wariness and good antidote, it would be wholesome enough to let them taste some choice comedies, Greek, Latin, or Italian; those tragedies also, that treat of household matters, as *Trachiniæ*, *Alcestis*, and the like.<sup>70</sup>

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for men who fully understand all the decisions on which their conduct rests.

<sup>64</sup> In *An Apology for Smectymnuus* Milton indicates his appreciation of Plato's dialogues and Xenophon's *Apology for Socrates*, *Memorabilia*, *Banquet*, and probably *Oeconomics*. Cicero's little tract *On Friendship* and his treatises on moral goodness, *De officiis* and *De finibus*, were standard ethical authorities. At this point Milton regards Plutarch's *Moralia* as appropriate reading for his pupils. Cf. note 34 above.

<sup>65</sup> *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* was probably written early in the third century A.D., but nothing is known about the author and even his name is in doubt. The work was much valued and frequently edited and translated on the Continent in the sixteenth century.

<sup>66</sup> Milton's interest in the forgery called *On the Soul of the World*, which was attributed to Plato's supposed teacher, Timæus of Locri, seems to be reflected in P.L. III, 718.

<sup>67</sup> *reduced*: brought back.

<sup>68</sup> *determinate sentence*: The Wisdom of Solomon, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Psalms of David, the Gospels, and the Epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, and St. James, are regarded as good, sententious reading with which to end the day's work.

<sup>69</sup> *Economics* retains its Greek meaning of "law governing the household" or the family. In *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* II, xii, Milton spoke of Moses' legislation on that subject as "a pure, moral, economical law."

<sup>70</sup> In Sophocles' *Trachiniæ* Deianira innocently causes the death of her husband, Hercules, in an attempt to regain his love, and kills herself out

The next remove must be to the study of politics;<sup>71</sup> to know the beginning, end, and reasons of political societies, that they may not in a dangerous fit of the commonwealth be such poor, shaken, uncertain reeds, of such a tottering conscience, as many of our great counsellors have lately shown themselves, but steadfast pillars of the state. After this, they are to dive into the grounds of law and legal justice; delivered first and with best warrant by Moses,<sup>72</sup> and as far as human prudence can be trusted, in those extolled remains of Grecian lawgivers, Lycurgus, Solon,<sup>73</sup> Zaleucus, Charondas,<sup>74</sup> and thence to all the Roman edicts and tables with their Justinian:<sup>75</sup> and so down to the Saxon and common laws of England, and the statutes.

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of remorse. Milton's admiration for the wife who sacrificed her life for her husband in Euripides' *Alcestis* prompted the opening lines of the sonnet on his own dead wife:

Methought I saw my late espoused Saint

Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave. . .

<sup>71</sup> Milton now thinks of his pupils as about eighteen years old and ready for the first of the two final subjects in their education, politics and literature. Cf. Introduction, #12-13.

<sup>72</sup> The Preface to *C.G.* strikingly illustrates Milton's interest in Moses as a lawgiver.

<sup>73</sup> Milton remembered that one of the first points made in Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* was that the Spartan lawgiver would "in no wise have any of his laws put into writing." In the *Life of Solon* Plutarch says that only the first couplet of his metrical code of laws for Athens had survived. The safeguards against tyrants in both codes impressed Milton, and here he may have thought of Solon's elegiac fragment praising the divine justice as the final hope of a turbulent world. In Stobaeus' *Anthology* the fragment closes the section on "Justice." Cf. Introduction, #9.

<sup>74</sup> In Stobaeus also Milton's pupils might read the Preface to the laws which Zaleucus was said to have given to the Locrian Greeks in the eighth century B.C., as well as the preamble to those which Charondas gave to the Greeks of Catania in Sicily early in the fifth century B.C. As Bentley was to point out in his *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, both those half-legendary legislators were mistakenly admired as if they had been pupils of Pythagoras; whereas in fact a forger "in the times of Ptolomee . . . made a System of Laws under the name of Zaleucus," and neither of the famous prefaces was a really primitive work.

<sup>75</sup> The *Twelve Tables*, which embodied the earliest Roman law, were engraved on bronze about 450 B.C., whereas the Edicts developed later, by decrees made annually, and were a gradually accumulating body of legislation. In the *Institutes* and *Digest* of the Emperor Justinian the Great (483-565 A.D.) Roman law had its most famous codification.

Sundays also and every evening may be now understandingly spent in the highest matters of theology and church history ancient and modern; and ere this time the Hebrew tongue at a set hour might have been gained, that the Scriptures may be now read in their own original; whereto it would be no impossibility to add the Chaldee and the Syrian<sup>76</sup> dialect. When all these employments are well conquered, then will the choice histories, heroic poems, and Attic tragedies<sup>77</sup> of stateliest and most regal argument, with all the famous political orations, offer themselves; which, if they were not only read, but some of them got by memory, and solemnly pronounced with right accent and grace, as might be taught, would endue them even with the spirit and vigor of Demosthenes or Cicero, Euripides or Sophocles.

And now, lastly,<sup>78</sup> will be the time to read with them those organic arts<sup>79</sup> which enable men to discourse and write perspicuously, elegantly, and according to the fitted style of lofty, mean, or lowly.<sup>80</sup> Logic, therefore, so much as is useful, is to be referred to this due place with all her well-couched heads

<sup>76</sup> After the return of the Jews from Babylon in the fifth century B.C. Hebrew soon gave way to Aramaic (which is known as Chaldee in the Old Testament, Daniel i,4, Ezekiel xxiii, 15 & 16, etc.), the dominant language of southern Babylonia. Syriac, or Christian Aramaic, is the language of the oldest manuscripts of the Synoptic Gospels. Cf. Introduction, #7.

<sup>77</sup> Milton's interest in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* is stamped upon *Paradise Lost*, and the influence of the great tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides is widespread in his prose and minor poems as well as in *P.L.* He admired Demosthenes for his orations defending Athenian independence against Philip of Macedon, and Cicero both for his orations in defense of Roman laws and liberty and for his contribution to the education of statesmen and orators in the *Rhetorica*, the *Orator*, and the *De Oratore*.

<sup>78</sup> *lastly*: the final stage in Milton's plan is based upon literary study, with effective expository writing and public speaking as its goals.

<sup>79</sup> *organic*: constructive or creative, as the terms are applied to literary composition.

<sup>80</sup> *lofty*, *mean*, or *lowly*: terms corresponding roughly to our formal, informal, and colloquial manners of speech and writing. In the seventeenth century the three "styles" were much more consciously distinguished than they are to-day, for they were severely governed by the principles of literary decorum.

and topics, until it be time to open her contracted palm<sup>81</sup> into a graceful and ornate rhetoric, taught out of the rule of Plato, Aristotle, Phalereus,<sup>82</sup> Cicero, Hermogenes,<sup>83</sup> Longinus.<sup>84</sup> To which poetry would be made subsequent, or indeed rather precedent, as being less subtle and fine, but more simple, sensuous, and passionate. I mean not here the prosody of a verse, which they could not but have hit on before among the rudiments of grammar; but that sublime art<sup>85</sup> which in Aristotle's *Poetics*, in Horace,<sup>86</sup> and the Italian commentaries of Castelvetro,<sup>87</sup> Tasso,<sup>88</sup> Mazzoni,<sup>89</sup> and others, teaches what the laws are of a true epic poem, what of a dramatic, what of a lyric, what

<sup>81</sup> The reference is to Aristotle's comparison—quoted by Cicero in *De Finibus* II, 6—of logic to a *contracted palm*, and of rhetoric to an open hand. Cf. Introduction, #4.

<sup>82</sup> Milton was perhaps as much interested in the reputation of Demetrius Phalereus (350–283 B.C.) for his eloquent defense of Athenian liberty as he was in the work on the art *Of Expression* which scholarship already suspected was by some later author.

<sup>83</sup> Hermogenes (late second century A.D.) was the author of five rhetorical works, of some of which the sixteenth and seventeenth century saw numerous editions, abridgements, and translations, often published in company with Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

<sup>84</sup> Modern scholarship doubts, but has not positively disproved the attribution of the great treatise *On the Sublime* to Longinus (late first century A.D.?).

<sup>85</sup> Milton is not defining poetry, but simply calling it *more* simple, sensuous and passionate than the rhetorical writing in which he has just proposed some training.

<sup>86</sup> Horace's *Art of Poetry* and Aristotle's *Poetics* were universally accepted as points of departure for all poetical theory in the Renaissance, in Italy, France, and Spain no less than in England.

<sup>87</sup> The Italian translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* which Ludovico Castelvetro (1505–71) published at Vienna in 1570 is famous for its part in shaping the neo-classical doctrine of the "three unities" of time, place, and action in drama, for its defense of romantic principles in epic poetry, and for its justification of pleasure as a no less legitimate object in poetry than edification.

<sup>88</sup> Torquato Tasso's *Discourses on Epic Poetry*, which were first published in Naples in 1594, may have interested Milton particularly during his visit to Manso in Naples. See *Mansus*, note 1.

<sup>89</sup> The *Defence of the "Divine Comedy" of Dante* by Jacopo Mazzoni (1548–98) was published in 1573 in order to defend Dante against criticism which tried to judge his work in the light of Aristotelian poetic theories. In 1587 Mazzoni published a second and longer *Defence* of his position.

decorum is,<sup>90</sup> which is the grand masterpiece to observe. This would make them soon perceive what despicable creatures our common rhymers and play-writers be, and show them what religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of poetry, both in divine and human things.

From hence, and not till now, will be the right season of forming them to be able writers and composers in every excellent matter, when they shall be thus fraught with an universal insight into things. Or whether they be to speak in parliament or council, honor and attention would be waiting on their lips. There would then also appear in pulpits other visages, other gestures, and stuff otherwise wrought than what we now sit under,<sup>91</sup> oftentimes to as great a trial of our patience as any other that they preach to us. These are the studies wherein our noble and our gentle youth ought to bestow their time in a disciplinary way from twelve to one and twenty: unless they rely more upon their ancestors dead than upon themselves living. In which methodical course it is so supposed they must proceed by the steady pace of learning onward, as at convenient times, for memory's sake, to retire back into the middle ward,<sup>92</sup> and sometimes into the rear of what they have been taught, until they have confirmed and solidly united the whole body of their perfected knowledge, like the last embattling of a Roman legion.

Now will be worth the seeing what exercises and recreations may best agree and become these studies.

The course of study hitherto briefly described is, what I can

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<sup>90</sup> Because contemporary criticism applied the principle of *decorum* to such problems as characterization in the drama and epic and the choice of style in work of every kind (see note 80, above), Milton calls it the master rule in all literary composition.

<sup>91</sup> Alluding to the importance of decorum, Milton wrote in *An Apology for Smectymnuus* (III, 347) protesting against the ignorance of Greek, Hebrew, and even of Latin among the clergy: "How few of them know how to write or speak a pure style, much less to distinguish the ideas and various kinds of style."

<sup>92</sup> *ward*: a division of an army (or city). Milton thinks of a final review as consolidating his pupils' knowledge of their subjects so as to make it resemble a regiment whose vanguard and rearguard are alike prepared for action.



guess by reading, likest to those ancient and famous schools<sup>93</sup> of Pythagoras, Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle, and such others out of which were bred up such a number of renowned philosophers, orators, historians, poets, and princes all over Greece, Italy, and Asia, besides the flourishing studies<sup>94</sup> of Cyrene and Alexandria. But herein it shall exceed them and supply a defect as great as that which Plato noted in the commonwealth of Sparta;<sup>95</sup> whereas that city trained up their youth most for war, and these in their academies and Lycæum<sup>96</sup> all for the gown, this institution of breeding which I here delineate shall be equally good both for peace and war. Therefore about an hour and a half ere they eat at noon should be allowed them for exercise and due rest afterwards; but the time for this may be enlarged at pleasure, according as their rising in the morning shall be early.

The exercise which I commend first is the exact use of their weapon,<sup>97</sup> to guard, and to strike safely with edge or point; this will keep them healthy, nimble, strong, and well in breath—is also the likeliest means to make them grow large and tall, and to inspire them with a gallant and fearless courage, which, being tempered with seasonable lectures and precepts to them of true fortitude and patience, will turn into a native and heroic

<sup>93</sup> *famous schools of Pythagoras*: Cf. Introduction, #11-13.

<sup>94</sup> *studies*: schools (Milton's rendering of the Latin *studia*). The medical center which grew up at Cyrene was less famous than the great headquarters of literary and scientific study which developed at Alexandria in the last three centuries B.C., to which we owe most of the work done by the early Neoplatonic philosophers, the Ptolemaic philosophy, and the translation of the Old Testament into Greek which is known as the Septuagint.

<sup>95</sup> Milton reflects Plato's disapproval of the overemphasis on military training in Sparta (*Laws* I, 633, 636), but (as Miss Lockwood pointed out) he also shared Plato's faith in athletic discipline as a moral stimulus. (*Laws* VII, 791.)

<sup>96</sup> The *Lycæum*, which was named after a neighboring temple of Apollo in the suburbs of Athens, was the headquarters of Aristotle's school, as the Academy was of Plato's students. Here both words imply the arts of peace of which the *gown* (or Roman toga, as opposed to the sword) was a traditional symbol.

<sup>97</sup> *Their weapon* is the sword, which Aubrey tells us that Milton liked to wear even after he lost his sight.

valor, and make them hate the cowardice of doing wrong. They must be also practised in all the locks and grips of wrestling, wherein Englishmen were wont to excel, as need may often be in fight to tug, to grapple, and to close. And this perhaps will be enough wherein to prove and heat their single strength.

The interim of unsweating themselves regularly, and convenient rest before meat may, both with profit and delight, be taken up in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music, heard or learned,<sup>98</sup> either while the skilful organist plies his grave and fancied descant<sup>99</sup> in lofty fugues,<sup>100</sup> or the whole symphony with artful and unimaginable touches adorn and grace the well-studied chords of some choice composer; sometimes the lute or soft organ-stop waiting on elegant voices, either to religious, martial, or civil ditties; which, if wise men and prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over dispositions and manners, to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions.<sup>101</sup> The like also would not be inexpedient after meat to assist and cherish nature in her first concoction<sup>102</sup> and send their minds back to study in good tune and satisfaction. Where having followed it close under vigilant eyes till about two hours before supper, they are, by a sudden alarum or watchword, to be called out to their military motions, under sky or covert, according to the season, as was the Roman wont; first on foot, then, as their age permits, on horseback, to all the art of cavalry; that having in sport, but with much exactness and daily muster, served out the rudiments of their soldier-ship in all the skill of embattling, marching, encamping, fortify-

<sup>98</sup> *learned*: studied or practiced.

<sup>99</sup> *descant*: here, probably "a variation of an air" (Webster's *New International Dictionary*) improvised by a musician.

<sup>100</sup> *fugue*: "a polyphonic composition, developed from a theme or themes, according to strict contrapuntal rules." (Webster.)

<sup>101</sup> For the part played by music in the education of the period, see Introduction, #11-12.

<sup>102</sup> *concoction*: digestion. The term related to Aristotle's teaching in his work *On the Parts of Animals* that the food in the intestine (or its substance) passed to the heart first in the form of vapor.

ing, besieging, and battering, with all the helps of ancient and modern stratagems, tactics, and warlike maxims, they may as it were out of a long war come forth renowned and perfect commanders in the service of their country. They would not then, if they were trusted with fair and hopeful armies, suffer them for want of just and wise discipline<sup>103</sup> to shed away from about them like sick feathers, though they be never so oft supplied; they would not suffer their empty and unrecrutable<sup>104</sup> colonels of twenty men in a company to quaff out or convey into secret hoards the wages of a delusive list and a miserable remnant; yet in the meanwhile to be overmastered with a score or two of drunkards, the only soldiery left about them, or else to comply with all rapines and violences. No, certainly, if they knew aught of that knowledge that belongs to good men or good governors, they would not suffer these things.

But to return to our own institute: besides these constant exercises at home, there is another opportunity of gaining experience to be won from pleasure itself abroad. In those vernal seasons of the year when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth. I should not therefore be a persuader to them of studying much then, after two or three years that they have well laid their grounds, but to ride<sup>105</sup> out in companies with prudent and staid guides to all the quarters of the land: learning and observing all places of strength, all commodities<sup>106</sup> of building and of soil,

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<sup>103</sup> F. C. Montague notes in *The History of England from the Accession of James I to the Restoration*, p. 272, that both the king and Parliament resorted to impressment to secure soldiers in the Civil War, that neither party paid its troops punctually, and that "indiscipline and desertion were common, but, since the king was much poorer than the Parliament, these evils were most glaring in his forces."

<sup>104</sup> *unrecrutable*: either incapable of recruiting their own forces, or unable, on account of their dishonesty in keeping their musters down in order to embezzle as much of the soldiers' pay as possible, to keep the recruits assigned to them.

<sup>105</sup> "Travel in the younger sort," said Bacon in beginning his essay *Of Travel*, "is a part of education;" but he expected that young men would "travel under some tutor or grave servant."

<sup>106</sup> *commodities*: conveniences, or aptness for various purposes.

for towns and tillage, harbours and ports for trade. Sometimes taking sea as far as to our navy, to learn there also what they can in the practical knowledge of sailing and of sea-fight.

These ways would try all their peculiar gifts of nature; and if there were any secret excellence among them, would fetch it out, and give it fair opportunities to advance itself by, which could not but mightily redound to the good of this nation, and bring into fashion again those old admired virtues and excellencies, with far more advantage now in this purity of Christian knowledge. Nor shall we then need the *monsieurs* of Paris<sup>107</sup> to take our hopeful youth into their slight and prodigal custodies and send them over back again transformed into mimics, apes, and kickshaws.<sup>108</sup> But if they desire to see other countries at three or four and twenty years of age, not to learn principles, but to enlarge experience and make wise observation, they will by that time be such as shall deserve the regard and honor of all men where they pass, and the society and friendship of those in all places who are best and most eminent. And perhaps then other nations will be glad to visit us for their breeding, or else to imitate us in their own country.

Now, lastly, for their diet there cannot be much to say, save only that it would be best in the same house; for much time else would be lost abroad, and many ill habits got; and that it should be plain, healthful, and moderate, I suppose is out of controversy. Thus, Master Hartlib, you have a general view in writing, as your desire was, of that which at several times I had discoursed with you concerning the best and noblest way of education; not beginning, as some have done, from the cradle,<sup>109</sup> which yet might be worth many considerations, if brevity had not been my scope. Many other circumstances also I could

<sup>107</sup> In 1667 Milton (*Familiar Letters*, 25) praised his young correspondent, Richard Jones, for "despising the luxuries of Paris," and for hastening to Italy to "enjoy the pleasures of literature and the conversation of the learned."

<sup>108</sup> *Kickshaws*: N. E. D. quotes Ussher's *Annals of the World*: "Xuthus a musician, Metrodorus a dancer, and all the Asian comicks and Kickshaws crept into the Court."

<sup>109</sup> *from the cradle*: perhaps Milton felt that his failure to follow the example of Quintilian in this respect was questionable.

have mentioned, but this, to such as have the worth in them to make trial, for light and direction may be enough. Only I believe that this is not a bow for every man to shoot in that counts himself a teacher; but will require sinews almost equal to those which Homer gave Ulysses;<sup>110</sup> yet I am withal persuaded that it may prove much more easy in the assay,<sup>111</sup> than it now seems at distance, and much more illustrious; howbeit, not more difficult than I imagine, and that imagination presents me with nothing but very happy and very possible according to best wishes; if God have so decreed, and this age have spirit and capacity enough to apprehend.

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<sup>110</sup> The account in the twenty-first book of the *Odyssey* of Ulysses bending the bow which none of the suitors of Penelope could handle, and slaying them all with it, had made the bow of Ulysses synonymous with any test which only the strongest could pass. Milton must have been familiar with many half humorous allusions to it, such as Ovid's in the *Amores* (VIII, 47-8), but he may have used it here because allegorical interpretations of the *Odyssey* generally treated Ulysses as a pattern of virtue whose adventures (as Natale Conti says in closing his chapter on him in *Mythologiae* IX, 1) were "thought out for the right instruction of human life and manners."

<sup>111</sup> *assay*: experiment, trial.

# THE REASON OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT URGED AGAINST PRELATY

## THE PREFACE.

IN THE publishing of human laws, which for the most part aim not beyond the good of civil society, to set them barely forth to the people without reason or preface, like a physical prescript,<sup>1</sup> or only with threatenings, as it were a lordly command, in the judgment of Plato was thought to be done neither generously nor wisely. His advice was, seeing that persuasion certainly is a more winning and more manlike way to keep men in obedience than fear, that to such laws as were of principal moment, there should be used as an induction some well-tempered discourse, showing how good, how gainful, how happy it must needs be to live according to honesty and justice; which being uttered with those native colors and graces of speech, as true eloquence,<sup>2</sup> the daughter of virtue, can best bestow upon her mother's praises, would so incite, and in a manner charm, the multitude into the love of that which is really good, as to embrace it ever after, not of custom and awe,

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<sup>1</sup> *physical prescript*: medical prescription. Milton assumed our familiarity with Plato's *Laws*. Here he recalls Plato's principle that, because all law is founded on reason, every individual law should carry a statement of its rational grounds as a part of its official formulation. In Book IV (720A) Plato compares good lawgivers to free-born, professional physicians who prescribe scientifically and explain the nature of every disease and its treatment to their patients; while bad lawgivers resemble the slave doctors to whom the Athenians sent their slaves for rough and ready treatment. The principle is immediately illustrated by the self-justifying form which Plato gives to an ideal law against celibacy, but its most conspicuous illustrations are the proem to the law against sacrilege (854 B.C.) and the entire tenth book, which introduces a similar law with an elaborate statement of Plato's theology.

<sup>2</sup> *True eloquence* is contrasted with the false eloquence which Plato regarded as the worst enemy of virtue and sound administration of law.

which most men do, but of choice and purpose, with true and constant delight. But this practice we may learn from a better and more ancient authority than any heathen writer hath to give us, and indeed being a point of so high wisdom and worth, how could it be but we should find it in that book within whose sacred context all wisdom is infolded? Moses,<sup>3</sup> therefore, the only lawgiver that we can believe to have been visibly taught of God, knowing how vain it was to write laws to men whose hearts were not first seasoned with the knowledge of God and of his works, began from the book of Genesis, as a prologue to his laws (which Josephus<sup>4</sup> right well hath noted), that the nation of the Jews, reading therein the universal goodness of God to all creatures in the creation, and his peculiar favor to them in his election of Abraham, their ancestor, from whom they could derive so many blessings upon themselves, might be moved to obey sincerely by knowing so good a reason of their obedience. If then, in the administration of civil justice and under the obscurity of ceremonial rites, such care was had by the wisest of the heathen, and by Moses among the Jews, to instruct them at least in a general reason of that government to

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<sup>3</sup> Moses' prophetic authority was one of the central interests of Calvinism. "For when God had chosen Moses to be his prophet," said Calvin, "he not onely commaunded him to speake, but also tooke him vp into the mountaine, and separated him from the companie of men, to the ende that when he should come to set forth his Law, the people should accept him as an Angell, and not as a mortal creature. He was there fortie daies without eating or drinking, to shewe that he was exempted from the common sort of men, and that God had taken him vp as it were into his heavenly glorie. And when he came down againe, his face shone as bright as it had beene another sunne. Where as men attribute hornes unto him, it is saide that he had sunne beames rounde about him." *The Sermons of M. Iohn Calvin upon Deuteronomie*. Translated by Arthur Golding. Pp. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Antiquities of the Jews* (Thomas Lodge's translation, edition of 1640, pp. 2-3) Josephus says that "Moses . . . began not his ordinances with the treatise of contracts and covenants which we practice with one another, as other lawmakers are accustomed to do, but he hath lifted their spirits on high, to the end they might think on God, and on the ornament of this world made by him, perswading that the most accomplished work among all those things which God had made in the world, was the creation of us men. After he had made them capable of things concerning piety, then might he more easily perswade them in the rest."

which their subjection was required, how much more ought the members of the church, under the gospel, seek to inform their understanding in the reason of that government which the church claims to have over them: especially for that the church hath in her immediate cure those inner parts and affections of the mind where the seat of reason is, having power to examine our spiritual knowledge and to demand from us in God's behalf a service entirely reasonable. But because about the manner and order of this government, whether it ought to be presbyterial or prelatical, such endless question, or rather uproar, is arisen in this land, as may be justly termed, what the fever is to the physicians, the eternal reproach of our divines, whilst other profound clerks of late, greatly, as they conceive, to the advancement of prelacy, are so earnestly meting out the Lydian proconsular Asia,<sup>5</sup> to make good the prime metropolis of Ephesus, as if some of our prelates in all haste meant to change their soil and become neighbours to the English bishop of Chalcedon;<sup>6</sup> and whilst good Breerwood<sup>7</sup> as busily bestirs himself in our vulgar tongue, to divide precisely the three patriarchates of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch; and whether to any of these England doth belong: I shall in the meanwhile not cease to hope through the mercy and grace of Christ, the head and husband of his church, that England shortly is to belong, neither to see patriarchal nor see prelatical, but to the faithful feeding and

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<sup>5</sup> *Lydian proconsular Asia* alludes to Archbishop Ussher's *Geographical and Historicall Disquisition*, a discussion of which may be found in Introduction, #27.

<sup>6</sup> The contemporary bishop of Chalcedon, Richard Smith (1566-1655), had been consecrated 12 January, 1625, by Cardinal Spada, then Papal Nuncio in Paris, to succeed William Bishop as Urban VIII's vicar apostolic for England and Scotland. He had been educated in part at Oxford, but went to Rome in 1586 to study under Cardinal Bellarmine. In 1592 he was ordained specifically for the English mission. As vicar general he was indiscreet and in 1629, when the Vatican ceased to recognize him, he took refuge in France, where he was protected by the Sorbonne and by Cardinal Richelieu. In 1635, when Gregorio Panzani was negotiating for the Vatican with Secretary Windebank and Charles, there seems to have been a proposal to reestablish the Bishop of Chalcedon in London as the acknowledged leader of the English Catholics.

<sup>7</sup> For Edward Brerewood's *Patriarchall Government of the Ancient Church* see Introduction #27.



disciplining of that ministerial order which the blessed apostles constituted throughout the churches; and this, I shall essay to prove, can be no other than that of presbyters<sup>8</sup> and deacons. And if any man incline to think I undertake a task too difficult for my years, I trust through the supreme enlightening assistance far otherwise; for my years, be they few or many, what imports it? So they bring reason, let that be looked on: and for the task, from hence that the question in hand is so needful to be known at this time, chiefly by every meaner capacity, and contains in it the explication of many admirable and heavenly privileges reached out to us by the gospel, I conclude the task must be easy: God having to this end ordained his gospel to be the revelation of his power and wisdom in Christ Jesus. And this is one depth of his wisdom, that he could so plainly reveal so great a measure of it to the gross, distorted apprehension of decayed mankind. Let others, therefore, dread and shun the Scriptures for their darkness; I shall wish I may deserve to be reckoned among those who admire and dwell upon them for their clearness. And this seems to be the cause why in those places of holy writ, wherein is treated of church-government, the reasons thereof are not formally and professedly set down, because to him that heeds attentively the drift and scope of Christian profession, they easily imply themselves; which thing further to explain, having now prefaced enough, I shall no longer defer.

## CHAPTER I.

*That Church-government is prescribed in the Gospel, and that to say otherwise is unsound.*

THE FIRST and greatest reason of church-government we may securely, with the assent of many on the adverse part, affirm to

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<sup>8</sup> *presbyters*: the Greek word which is transliterated in this way, and from which *priest* is ultimately derived, meant literally "elders." Cf. Introduction #16.

be because we find it so ordained and set out to us by the appointment of God in the scriptures; but whether this be presbyterial or prelatical, it cannot be brought to the scanning, until I have said what is meet to some who do not think it for the ease of their inconsequent opinions to grant that church discipline is platformed in the Bible, but that it is left to the discretion of men. To this conceit of theirs I answer that it is both unsound and untrue. For there is not that thing in the world of more grave and urgent importance throughout the whole life of man, than is discipline. What need I instance? He that hath read with judgment of nations and commonwealths, of cities and camps, of peace and war, sea and land, will readily agree that the flourishing and decaying of all civil societies, all the moments and turnings of human occasions, are moved to and fro as upon the axle of discipline. So that whatsoever power or sway in mortal things weaker men have attributed to fortune, I durst with more confidence (the honor of Divine Providence ever saved) ascribe either to the vigor or the slackness of discipline. Nor is there any sociable perfection in this life, civil or sacred, that can be above discipline; but she is that which with her musical chords preserves and holds all the parts thereof together. Hence in those perfect armies of Cyrus in Xenophon,<sup>9</sup> and Scipio<sup>10</sup> in the Roman stories, the excellence of military skill was esteemed, not by the not needing, but by the readiest submitting to the edicts of their commander. And certainly discipline is not only the removal of disorder; but if any visible shape can be given to divine things,

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<sup>9</sup> In the *Cyropaedia* I, vi, Xenophon describes Cyrus' discipline of the Persian soldiers and quotes (20-21) a conversation between him and his father, Cambyzes, in which Cyrus praises the obedience which is secured by honor for the obedient and punishment for the disobedient, but in reply is taught by his father the difference between compulsory and willing submission to a general's commands.

<sup>10</sup> Milton had in mind the stress laid upon the discipline of Publius Cornelius Scipio, surnamed Africanus for his victories over Hannibal in the Second Punic War, by both Livy and Dio Cassius. A typical instance is Dio's account (Zonaras, 9, 11) of Scipio's creation of an effectively disciplined army out of raw Sicilian conscripts in 205 B.C.

the very visible shape and image of virtue,<sup>11</sup> whereby she is not only seen in the regular gestures and motions of her heavenly paces as she walks, but also makes the harmony of her voice audible to mortal ears. Yea, the angels themselves, in whom no disorder is feared, as the apostle that saw them in his rapture describes, are distinguished and quaternioned into their celestial principdoms and satrapies, according as God himself hath writ his imperial decrees through the great provinces of heaven. The state also of the blessed in paradise, though never so perfect, is not therefore left without discipline, whose golden surveying reed<sup>12</sup> marks out and measures every quarter and circuit of New Jerusalem. Yet is it not to be conceived that those eternal effluences of sanctity and love in the glorified saints should by this means be confined and cloyed with repetition of that which is prescribed, but that our happiness may orb itself into a thousand vagancies<sup>13</sup> of glory and delight, and with a kind of eccentrical equation be, as it were, an invariable planet of joy and felicity; how much less can we believe that God would leave his frail and feeble, though not less beloved church here below, to the perpetual stumble of conjecture and disturbance in this our dark voyage, without the card and compass of discipline? Which is so hard to be of man's making that we may see even in the guidance of a civil state to worldly happiness, it is not for every learned or every wise man, though many of them consult in common, to invent or frame a discipline: but if it be at all the work of man, it must be of such a one as is a true knower of himself, and himself in whom contemplation and practice, wit, prudence, fortitude, and eloquence must be rarely met, both to comprehend the hidden causes of things and span in his thoughts all the various effects that

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<sup>11</sup> Compare the "very visible shape and image of virtue" with the incarnation of "Virtue in her shape how lovely" in the angel Zephon in *P.L.* IV, 848, and with Satan's confession to Christ in *P.R.* III, 11:

thy heart

Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.

<sup>12</sup> For the angelic discipline and its golden surveying reed cf. Introduction #18.

<sup>13</sup> *vagancies*: extravagances or varieties.

passion or complexion<sup>14</sup> can work in man's nature; and hereto must his hand be at defiance with gain, and his heart in all virtues heroic;<sup>15</sup> so far is it from the ken of these wretched projectors of ours that bescrawl their pamphlets every day with new forms of government for our church. And therefore all the ancient lawgivers were either truly inspired, as Moses, or were such men as with authority enough might give it out to be so, as Minos, Lycurgus, Numa,<sup>16</sup> because they wisely forethought that men would never quietly submit to such a discipline as had not more of God's hand in it than man's. To come within the narrowness of household government, observation will show us many deep counsellors of state and judges to demean themselves incorruptly in the settled course of affairs, and many worthy preachers upright in their lives, powerful in their audience: but look upon either of these men where they are left to their own disciplining<sup>17</sup> at home, and you shall soon perceive, for all their single knowledge and uprightness, how deficient they are in the regulating of their own family; not only

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<sup>14</sup> *complexion*: temperament or character. Milton is thinking of Plato's ideal lawgiver, who must observe all the pains and pleasures, the desires and strong passions of his citizens in all the relations of life, and know how to control them by laws apportioning praise and blame. (*Laws* I, 631E.)

<sup>15</sup> "Masculous resolution and strenuous action are the two twins of an Heroick Spirit," Alexander Leighton wrote in *An Appeal to Parliament*, p. 266. Cf. Introduction #18.

<sup>16</sup> Milton's thought was a commonplace. It was put with a slightly different emphasis by Machiavelli: "Truly never was there yet any maker of extraordinary lawes in a nation, that had not this recourse [*i.e.* Numa's] to God, for otherwise the lawes had not bin accepted. For many severall goods are knowne by a wise man, which have not such evident reasons in themselves, that he by perswasion can quickly make others conceive them. Therefore the wise men that would free themselves of this difficulty, have recourse to a God; so did *Lycurgus*, so *Solon*, so many others whose designe was the same with theirs." *Machiavels Discourses*, translated by E.D. (1636), pp. 62-3. (*Discourses on Titus Livius* I, xi.) Cf. Introduction #9 and *Of Education*, note 73.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Calvin: "In fellowship, yea no house, though it have but a small household, can be kept in right state without discipline; the same is much more necessarie in the Church, whose state ought to be most orderly of all." *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Translated by Thomas Norton, 1634) IV, xii, 1; p. 604. Cf. Introduction #18-19.

in what may concern the virtuous and decent composure of their minds in their several places, but, that which is of a lower and easier performance, the right possessing of the outward vessel, their body, in health or sickness, rest or labor, diet or abstinence, whereby to render it more pliant to the soul and useful to the commonwealth: which if men were but as good to discipline themselves as some are to tutor their horses and hawks, it could not be so gross in most households. If then it appear so hard and so little known, how to govern a house well, which is thought of so easy discharge and for every man's undertaking, what skill of man, what wisdom, what parts can be sufficient to give laws and ordinances to the elect household of God? If we could imagine that he had left it at random without his provident and gracious ordering, who is he so arrogant, so presumptuous, that durst dispose and guide the living ark of the Holy Ghost,<sup>18</sup> though he should find it wandering in the field of Bethshemesh, without the conscious warrant of some high calling? But no profane insolence can parallel that which our prelates dare avouch, to drive outrageously and shatter the holy ark of the church, not borne upon their shoulders with pains and labor in the word, but drawn with rude oxen, their officials, and their own brute inventions. Let them make shows of reforming while they will, so long as the church is mounted upon the prelatical cart, and not, as it ought, between the hands of the ministers, it will but shake and totter; and he that sets to his hand, though with a good intent to hinder the shogging of it in this unlawful waggonry wherein it rides, let him beware it be not fatal to him, as it was to Uzzah. Certainly if God be the father of his family the

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<sup>18</sup> Milton was thinking of the story in II Samuel vi of David's attempt to move the ark of God in state, "on a new cart," drawn by oxen, to a proper resting place. But "when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God." I Samuel vi, 19 relates God's destruction of fifty thousand of the Philistines of Bethshemesh "because they had looked into the ark of the Lord."

church, wherein could he express that name more than in training it up under his own allwise and dear economy, not turning it loose to the havoc of strangers and wolves,<sup>19</sup> that would ask no better plea than this, to do in the church of Christ whatever humor, faction, policy, or licentious will would prompt them to? Again, if Christ be the church's husband,<sup>20</sup> expecting her to be presented before him a pure unspotted virgin, in what could he show his tender love to her more than in prescribing his own ways which he best knew would be to the improvement of her health and beauty, with much greater care doubtless than the Persian king could appoint for his queen Esther those maiden dietings and set prescriptions of baths and odors,<sup>21</sup> which may tender her at last more amiable to his eye? For of any age or sex, most unfitly may a virgin be left to an uncertain and arbitrary education. Yea, though she be well instructed, yet is she still under a more strait tuition, especially if betrothed. In like manner the church bearing the same resemblance, it were not reason to think she should be left destitute of that care which is as necessary and proper to her as instruction. For public preaching indeed is the gift of the Spirit, working as best seems to his secret will, but discipline is the practic work of preaching directed and applied as is most requisite to particular duty; without which it were all one to the benefit of souls, as it would be to the cure of bodies, if all the physicians in London should get into the several pulpits of the city, and, assembling all the diseased in every parish, should begin a learned lecture of pleurisies, palsies, lethargies, to which perhaps none there

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<sup>19</sup> *wolves*: cf. Introduction #21.

<sup>20</sup> "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. xxi, 2.) "Christ vouchsafeth so to honour marriage," wrote Calvin, "that he willeth it to be an image of his holy conjoyning with the Church." (*Institutes* IV, xii, 24; p. 615.)

<sup>21</sup> "Six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women" are mentioned in Esther ii, 12, as having been prescribed for Esther before she was admitted to her first meeting with her lover, King Ahasuerus. Allegorical interpretation of the story easily recognized Esther as a type of the Church.

present were inclined; and so, without so much as feeling one pulse, or giving the least order to any skilful apothecary, should dismiss'em from time to time, some groaning, some languishing, some expiring, with this only charge, to look well to themselves and do as they hear.<sup>22</sup> Of what excellence and necessity then church-discipline is, how beyond the faculty of man to frame and how dangerous to be left to man's invention, who would be every foot turning it to sinister ends; how properly also it is the work of God as father and of Christ as husband of the church, we have by thus much heard.

## CHAPTER II.

*That Church-government is set down in holy Scripture, and that to say otherwise is untrue.*

AS THEREFORE it is unsound to say that God hath not appointed any set government in his church, so it is untrue. Of the time of the law there can be no doubt; for to let pass the first institution of priests and Levites, which is too clear to be insisted upon, when the temple came to be built, which in plain judgment could breed no essential change, either in religion or in the priestly government, yet God, to show how little he could endure that men should be tampering and contriving in his worship, though in things of less regard, gave to David for Solomon not only a pattern and model of the temple, but a direction for the courses of the priests and Levites and for all the work of their service. At the return from the captivity things were only restored after the ordinance of Moses and David; or if the least alteration be to be found, they had with them inspired men, prophets; and it were not sober to say they did aught of moment without divine intimation. In

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<sup>22</sup> The allusion is to a slightly later part of the passage in Plato's *Laws* (720C) to which Milton has already referred in his opening sentence. Plato says that the slave doctors are absurdly indifferent to the case histories of their patients. Cf. note 191 below.

the prophecy of Ezekiel,<sup>23</sup> from the fortieth chapter onward, after the destruction of the temple, God, by his prophet, seeking to wean the hearts of the Jews from their old law, to expect a new and more perfect reformation under Christ, sets out before their eyes the stately fabric and constitution of his church, with all the ecclesiastical functions appertaining: indeed the description is as sorted best to the apprehension of those times, typical and shadowy, but in such manner as never yet came to pass, nor never must literally, unless we mean to annihilate the gospel. But so exquisite and lively the description is in portraying the new state of the church, and especially in those points where government seems to be most active, that both Jews and Gentiles might have good cause to be assured that God, whenever he meant to reform his church, never intended to leave the government thereof, delineated here in such curious architecture, to be patched afterwards and varnished over with the devices and embellishings of man's imagination. Did God take such delight in measuring out the pillars, arches, and doors of a material temple? Was he so punctual and circumspect in lavers,<sup>24</sup> altars, and sacrifices soon after to be abrogated, lest any of these should have been made contrary to his mind? Is not a far more perfect work, more agreeable to his perfection in the most perfect state of the church militant, the new alliance of God to man? Should not he rather now by his own prescribed discipline have cast his line and level upon the soul of man, which is his rational temple, and by the divine square and compass thereof form and regen-

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<sup>23</sup> The elaborate directions for the service of the Hebrew priests in Leviticus xxi-xxiv and of the Levites in Numbers i, iii, and iv, and the detailed specifications for Solomon's temple in I Kings vi and II Chronicles iii and iv, and for the reconstructed temple of Ezra and Nehemiah as it was ideally designed by Ezekiel, were traditionally taken by the Reformers as types of the government of the Church. Cf. Introduction #31.

<sup>24</sup> *lavers*: vessels for washing sacrifices. In Solomon's temple, beside the great laver or molten sea where the priests washed their hands, ten raised lavers of brass are described in I Kings vii, 27-39, as standing, five on the north and five on the south side of the court of the priests, for the cleansing of sacrifices.



erate in us the lovely shapes of virtues and graces, the sooner to edify and accomplish that immortal stature of Christ's body, which is his church, in all her glorious lineaments and proportions? And that this indeed God hath done for us in the gospel we shall see with open eyes, not under a veil. We may pass over the history of the Acts and other places, turning only to those epistles of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, where the spiritual eye may discern more goodly and gracefully erected than all the magnificence of temple or tabernacle, such a heavenly structure of evangelic discipline, so diffusive of knowledge and charity to the prosperous increase and growth of the church, that it cannot be wondered if that elegant and artful symmetry of the promised new temple in Ezekiel, and all those sumptuous things under the law, were made to signify the inward beauty and splendor of the Christian church thus governed. And whether this be commanded, let it now be judged. St. Paul, after his preface to the first of Timothy, which he concludes in the seventeenth verse with Amen, enters upon the subject of this epistle, which is to establish the church government, with a command: "This charge I commit to thee, son Timothy; according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare."<sup>25</sup> Which is plain enough thus expounded: This charge I commit to thee, wherein I now go about to instruct thee how thou shalt set up church discipline, that thou mightest war a good warfare, bearing thyself constantly and faithfully in the ministry, which, in the first to the Corinthians, is also called a warfare.<sup>26</sup> And so after a kind of parenthesis concerning Hymenæus, he returns to his command, though under the mild word of exhorting (chap. ii. v. 1), "I exhort therefore;"—as if he had interrupted his former command by the occasional mention of Hymenæus.<sup>27</sup> More beneath in the fourteenth verse of the third chapter,

<sup>25</sup> For St. Paul's charge to Timothy in I Timothy i, 18, cf. Introduction #25.

<sup>26</sup> Milton may have thought of the allusion in I Corinthians ix, 7, to the ministry of Paul and Barnabas as "a warfare."

<sup>27</sup> In the last verse of the first chapter of I Timothy, Hymenæus is mentioned as one of those who "concerning faith have made shipwreck."

when he hath delivered the duties of bishops or presbyters and deacons, not once naming any other order in the church, he thus adds; "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; (such necessity it seems there was;) but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God." From this place it may be justly asked whether Timothy by this here written might know what was to be known concerning the orders of church governors or no. If he might, then in such a clear text as this may we know too without further jangle; if he might not, then did St. Paul write insufficiently, and moreover said not true, for he saith here he might know; and I persuade myself he did know ere this was written, but that the apostle had more regard to the instruction of us than to the informing of him. In the fifth chapter, after some other church-precepts concerning discipline, mark what a dreadful command follows (v. 21): "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that thou observe these things." And as if all were not yet sure enough, he closes up the epistle with an adjuring charge thus: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, that thou keep this commandment:" that is, the whole commandment concerning discipline, being the main purpose of the epistle: although Hooker would fain have this denouncement referred to the particular precept going before, because the word commandment is in the singular number, not remembering that even in the first chapter of this epistle the word commandment is used in a plural sense (v. 5): "Now the end of the commandment is charity,"<sup>28</sup> and what more frequent than in like manner to say the law of Moses? So that either to restrain the significance too much, or too much to enlarge it, would make the adjuration either not so weighty or not so pertinent. And thus we find here that the rules of church discipline are not only commanded but hedged about with such a terrible impalement of commands,

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<sup>28</sup> The full verse, I Timothy i, 5, reads: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Cf. Introduction #32.

as he that will break through wilfully to violate the least of them, must hazard the wounding of his conscience even to death. Yet all this notwithstanding, we shall find them broken well nigh all by the fair pretenders even of the next ages. No less to the contempt of him whom they feign to be the arch-founder of prelaty, St. Peter, who, by what he writes in the fifth<sup>29</sup> chapter of his first epistle, should seem to be far another man than tradition reports him: there he commits to the presbyters only full authority both of feeding the flock and episcopating; and commands that obedience be given to them as to the mighty hand of God, which is his mighty ordinance. Yet all this was as nothing to repel the venturous boldness of innovation that ensued, changing the decrees of God that is immutable, as if they had been breathed by man. Nevertheless when Christ by these visions of St. John<sup>30</sup> foreshows the reformation of his church, he bids him take his reed and mete it out again after the first pattern, for he prescribes him no other. "Arise," said the angel, "and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein."<sup>31</sup> What is there in the world can measure men but discipline? Our word ruling imports no less. Doctrine indeed is the measure, or at least the reason of the measure, 'tis true; but unless the measure be applied to that which it is to measure, how can it actually do its proper work? Whether therefore discipline be all one with doctrine or the particular application thereof to this or that person, we all agree that doctrine must be such only as is commanded; or whether it be something really differing from doctrine, yet was

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<sup>29</sup> In the first verse of the fifth and last chapter of I Peter, which is a general charge to the clergy of the churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, and the Roman province of Asia, only the elders (*i. e.* presbyters or priests) are addressed.

<sup>30</sup> For *these visions of St. John* see note 12 above and Introduction #18.

<sup>31</sup> The passage to which Milton refers here and below is Revelation xi, 1-2; "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein."

"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."

it only of God's appointment as being the most adequate measure of the church and her children, which is here the office of a great evangelist and the reed given him from heaven. But that part of the temple which is not thus measured, so far is it from being in God's tuition or delight, that in the following verse he rejects it; however in show and visibility it may seem a part of his church, yet inasmuch as it lies thus unmeasured, he leaves it to be trampled by the Gentiles, that is to be polluted with idolatrous and Gentilish rites and ceremonies. And that the principal reformation here foretold<sup>32</sup> is already come to pass as well in discipline as in doctrine, the state of our neighbour churches afford us to behold. Thus through all the periods and changes of the church it hath been proved that God hath still reserved to himself the right of enacting church-government.

### CHAPTER III.

*That it is dangerous and unworthy the Gospel to hold that Church-government is to be patterned by the Law, as Bishop Andrews and the Primate of Armagh maintain.*

WE MAY return now from this interposing difficulty thus removed, to affirm that, since church government is so strictly commanded in God's word, the first and greatest reason why we should submit thereto is because God hath so commanded. But whether of these two, prelaty or presbytery, can prove itself to be supported by this first and greatest reason, must be the next dispute; wherein this position is to be first laid down as granted, that I may not follow a chase rather than an argument, that one of these two and none other, is of God's ordaining; and if it be, that ordinance must be evident in the gospel. For the imperfect and obscure institution of the law, which the

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<sup>32</sup> Milton had the authority of Paraeus for saying that, "This is a generall prophesie touching the restoring of the Church being declyned under Antichrist." (*Commentary on the Revelation*, p. 211.) Cf. Introduction #18 and 22.

apostles themselves doubt<sup>33</sup> not oftentimes to vilify, cannot give rules to the complete and glorious ministration of the gospel, which looks on the law as on a child, not as on a tutor. And that the prelates have no sure foundation in the gospel, their own guiltiness doth manifest; they would not else run questing up as high as Adam to fetch their original, as 'tis said one of them lately did in public. To which assertion, had I heard it, because I see they are so insatiable of antiquity,<sup>34</sup> I should have gladly assented and confessed them yet more ancient: for Lucifer,<sup>35</sup> before Adam, was the first prelate angel, and both he, as is commonly thought, and our forefather Adam, as we all know, for aspiring above their orders were miserably degraded. But others, better advised, are content to receive their beginning from Aaron and his sons, among whom bishop Andrews<sup>36</sup> of late years, and in these times the primate of Armagh,<sup>37</sup> for their learning are reputed the best able to say what may be said in this opinion. The primate in his discourse about the original of episcopacy newly revised, begins thus: "The ground of episcopacy is fetched partly from the pattern prescribed by God in the Old Testament, and partly from the imitation thereof brought in by the apostles." Herein I must entreat to be excused of the desire I have to be satisfied, how for example the ground of episcopacy is fetched partly from the example of the Old Testament, by whom next, and by whose authority. Secondly, how the church government

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<sup>33</sup> *doubt*: hesitate. Milton thought of passages like Paul's saying that "Christ is the end of the law" (Rom. viii, 3). Cf. Introduction #31.

<sup>34</sup> *antiquity*: ancient precedent. Cf. Introduction #23-24.

<sup>35</sup> Compare the treatment of Lucifer's pride in *P. L.* I, 34-44.

<sup>36</sup> Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), to whom Milton's *Elegy III* was dedicated, was successively bishop of Chichester, Ely, and Winchester. His justification of episcopacy from the Aaronic priesthood of the Old Testament in *A summary view of the Government both of the Old and New Testament*, to which Milton refers, had been reprinted in 1641 in *Certaine Briefe Treatises*. Cf. Introduction #27.

<sup>37</sup> James Ussher (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh, was very unpopular at this time with the Puritans for his stand in his sermon on *The Sovereignes Power and the Subjects Duty* (Oxford, 1644). Today he is best known for his work on Biblical chronology. For the work from which Milton quotes cf. Introduction #27.

under the gospel can be rightly called an imitation of that in the Old Testament;<sup>38</sup> for that the gospel is the end and fulfilling of the law, our liberty also from the bondage of the law, I plainly read. How then the ripe age of the gospel should be put to school again and learn to govern herself from the infancy of the law, the stronger to imitate the weaker, the freeman to follow the captive, the learned to be lessoned by the rude, will be a hard undertaking to evince from any of those principles which either art or inspiration hath written. If anything done by the apostles may be drawn howsoever to a likeness of something Mosaical, if it cannot be proved that it was done of purpose in imitation, as having the right thereof grounded in nature and not in ceremony or type, it will little avail the matter. The whole Judaic law is either political (and to take pattern by that, no Christian nation ever thought itself obliged in conscience) or moral, which contains in it the observation of whatsoever is substantially and perpetually true and good, either in religion or course of life. That which is thus moral, besides what we fetch from those unwritten laws and ideas which nature hath engraven in us, the gospel, as stands with her dignity most, lectures to us from her own authentic handwriting and command, not copies out from the borrowed manuscript of a subservient scroll, by way of imitating: as well might she be said in her sacrament of water to imitate the baptism of John.<sup>39</sup> What though she retain excommunication used in the synagogue, retain the morality of the sabbath, she does not therefore imitate the law, her underling, but perfect her. All that was morally delivered from the law to the gospel in the office of the priests and Levites was that there should be a ministry set apart to teach and discipline the church, both which duties the apostles thought good to commit to the presbyters. And if any distinction of honor were to be made

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<sup>38</sup> Compare Alexander Leighton's typical denial that England was bound by either the political or religious constitutions of the Jews. Cf. Introduction #31.

<sup>39</sup> In Acts xix, 1-5, Paul persuades some disciples who had received the "baptism of repentance" of John the Baptist, to accept baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus."

among them, they directed it should be to those not that only rule well, but especially to those that labor in the word and doctrine.\* By which we are taught that laborious teaching is the most honorable prelacy that one minister can have above another in the gospel; if, therefore, the superiority of bishopship be grounded on the priesthood as a part of the moral law, it cannot be said to be an imitation; for it were ridiculous that morality should imitate morality, which ever was the same thing. This very word of patterning or imitating excludes episcopacy from the solid and grave ethical law, and betrays it to be a mere child of ceremony, or likelier some misbegotten thing that having plucked the gay feathers of her obsolete bravery to hide her own deformed bareness, now vaunts and glories in her stolen plumes. In the meanwhile, what danger there is against the very life of the gospel to make in anything the typical law her pattern, and how impossible in that which touches the priestly government, I shall use such light as I have received, to lay open. It cannot be unknown by what expressions the holy apostle St. Paul spares not to explain to us the nature and condition of the law, calling those ordinances which were the chief and essential offices of the priests, the elements and rudiments of the world, both weak and beggarly.<sup>40</sup> Now to breed and bring up the children of the promise, the heirs of liberty and grace, under such a kind of government as is professed to be but an imitation of that ministry which engendered to bondage the sons of Agar,<sup>41</sup> how can this be but a foul injury and derogation, if not a cancelling of that birthright and

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\* Milton's note: I Tim. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Milton alludes to Paul's protest in Galations iv, 9, against the desire of some converted Jews to return "again to the weak and beggarly elements" of the Mosaic law.

<sup>41</sup> *Agar*: Hagar, Abraham's bondwoman, who bore his son Ishmael. In Galatians iv, 21-31, Paul makes the two sons of Abraham, "the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman," an allegory of "the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all. . . .

"So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

immunity which Christ hath purchased for us with his blood? For the ministration of the law,<sup>42</sup> consisting of carnal things, drew to it such a ministry as consisted of carnal respects, dignity, precedence, and the like. And such a ministry established in the gospel, as is founded upon the points and terms of superiority and nests itself in worldly honors, will draw to it, and we see it doth, such a religion as runs back again to the old pomp and glory of the flesh. For doubtless there is a certain attraction and magnetic force betwixt the religion and the ministerial form thereof. If the religion be pure, spiritual, simple, and lowly, as the gospel most truly is, such must the face of the ministry be. And in like manner, if the form of the ministry be grounded in the worldly degrees of authority, honor, temporal jurisdiction, we see it with our eyes it will turn the inward power and purity of the gospel into the outward carnality of the law, evaporating and exhaling the internal worship into empty conformities and gay shows. And what remains then but that we should run into as dangerous and deadly apostacy as our lamented neighbours the papists, who, by this very snare and pitfall of imitating the ceremonial law, fell into that irrecoverable superstition, as must needs make void the covenant of salvation to them that persist in this blindness?

#### CHAPTER IV.

*That it is impossible to make the Priesthood of Aaron a pattern whereon to ground Episcopacy.*

THAT which was promised next is to declare the impossibility of grounding evangelic government in the imitation of the Jewish priesthood; which will be done by considering both the

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<sup>42</sup> *The ministration of the law* was more influential in English ecclesiastical polity than appears from Milton's argument. Its prestige is illustrated by the analogy between the royal supremacy in the English church and the powers of "the godly kings . . . among the Jews and Christian emperors of the primitive church" which was drawn by the second of the Canons of 1603.



quality of the persons and the office itself. Aaron and his sons were the princes of their tribe, before they were sanctified to the priesthood:<sup>43</sup> that personal eminence which they held above the other Levites, they received not only from their office, but partly brought it into their office; and so from that time forward the priests were not chosen out of the whole number of the Levites, as our bishops, but were born inheritors of the dignity. Therefore, unless we shall choose our prelates only out of the nobility and let them run in a blood, there can be no possible imitation of lording over their brethren in regard of their persons altogether unlike. As for the office, which was a representation of Christ's own person more immediately in the high-priest, and of his whole priestly office in all the other, to the performance of which the Levites were but as servitors and deacons, it was necessary there should be a distinction of dignity between two functions of so great odds. But there being no such difference among our ministers, unless it be in reference to the deacons, it is impossible to found a prelacy upon the imitation of this priesthood. For wherein, or in what work, is the office of a prelate excellent above that of a pastor? In ordination, you'll say, but flatly against scripture, for there we know Timothy<sup>44</sup> received ordination by the hands of the presbytery, notwithstanding all the vain delusions that are used to evade that testimony and maintain an unwarrantable usurpation. But wherefore should ordination be a cause of setting up a superior degree in the church? Is not that whereby Christ became our Saviour a higher and greater work than that whereby he did ordain messengers to preach and publish him

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<sup>43</sup> The priestly office was assigned to Aaron and his sons forever (Ex. xxvii, 21).

<sup>44</sup> Milton was replying to interpretations of Timothy's ordination by "the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem" (Acts xvi, 4) such as the following in Bishop Bilson's *Perpetuall Governement of Christes Churche* (p. 302): "And touching hands laid on Timothy by the Presbyterie, you answere your selves, for when you alleage that the Presbyterie did impose handes on Timothy, wee aske you whether all the Presbyterie had right and power to impose handes, or onely some of them? If all, then Laie Elders must either impose handes (which Calvine conclusively denieth [*Inst.* li. 4. ca. 3]) or be no part of the Presbyterie."

our Saviour? Every minister sustains the person of Christ in his highest work of communicating to us the mysteries of our salvation, and hath the power of binding and absolving; how should he need a higher dignity to represent or execute that which is an inferior work in Christ? Why should the performance of ordination, which is a lower office, exalt a prelate and not the seldom discharge of a higher and more noble office, which is preaching and administering, much rather depress him? Verily, neither the nature nor the example of ordination doth any way require an imparity between the ordainer and the ordained. For what more natural than every like to produce his like, man to beget man, fire to propagate fire? And in examples of highest opinion the ordainer is inferior to the ordained; for the pope is not made by the precedent pope, but by cardinals, who ordain and consecrate to a higher and greater office than their own.

## CHAPTER V.

### *To the Arguments of Bishop Andrews and the Primate.*

IT FOLLOWS here to attend to certain objections in a little treatise lately printed among others of like sort at Oxford, and in the title said to be out of the rude draughts of Bishop Andrews: and surely they be rude draughts indeed, insomuch that it is marvel to think what his friends meant, to let come abroad such shallow reasonings with the name of a man so much bruited for learning. In the twelfth and twenty-third pages he seems most notoriously inconstant to himself; for in the former place he tells us he forbears to take any argument of prelaty from Aaron, as being the type of Christ. In the latter he can forbear no longer, but repents him of his rash gratuity, affirming, that to say, Christ being come in the flesh, his figure in the high-priest ceaseth, is the shift of an anabaptist;<sup>45</sup> and

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<sup>45</sup> The Anabaptists denied the efficacy of infant baptism and the right of civil authorities to interfere in ecclesiastical affairs. The communism

stiffly argues that Christ being as well king as priest, was as well foreremembled by the kings then as by the high-priest. So that if his coming take away the one type, it must also the other. Marvellous piece of divinity! and well worth that the land should pay six thousand pound a year for in a bishopric, although I read of no sophister among the Greeks that was so dear, neither Hippias nor Protagoras,<sup>46</sup> nor any whom the Socratic school famously refuted without hire. Here we have the type of the king sewed to the tippet<sup>47</sup> of the bishop, subtly to cast a jealousy upon the crown, as if the right of kings, like Meleager in the *Metamorphosis*,<sup>48</sup> were no longer-lived than the firebrand of prelacy. But more likely the prelates fearing (for their own guilty carriage protests they do fear) that their fair days cannot long hold, practise, by possessing the king with this most false doctrine, to engage his power for them as in his own quarrel, that when they fall they may fall in a general ruin, just as cruel Tiberius<sup>49</sup> would wish,

When I die let the earth be rolled in flames.

But where, O Bishop, doth the purpose of the law set forth Christ to us as a king? That which never was intended in the law can never be abolished as part thereof. When the law was made, there was no king: if before the law, or under the law, God by a special type in any king would foresignify the future kingdom of Christ, which is not yet visibly come,

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of the early Anabaptists, who took part in the Peasants' Wars in Germany and were bloodily suppressed in Münster in 1535, was remembered, and they were regarded as dangerously subversive.

<sup>46</sup> In the prologue of Plato's *Hippias Major* the sophist is ironically rallied by Socrates on his big fees. Protagoras' financial aptitude figures in Plato's *Meno* 91D.

<sup>47</sup> *tippet*: scarf or cape cut to a formal pattern for a bishop's use.

<sup>48</sup> In *Metamorphoses* VIII, 425-525, Ovid tells the story of Althaea's careful preservation of the half-burnt brand on which the life of her infant son, Meleager, depended, and of her burning of the brand, years later, to avenge her brothers, Plexippus and Toxeus, whom he had killed in a moment of anger.

<sup>49</sup> Tiberius Claudius Nero, Emperor of Rome 14-37 A.D., was notorious for his maltreatment of writers who offended him. The verse quoted here is attributed to him by Dio Cassius in the *Roman History*, LXVIII, xxiii and by Suetonius in his *Life of Nero*, xxxviii.

what was that to the law? The whole ceremonial law, and types can be in no law else, comprehends nothing but the propitiatory office of Christ's priesthood, which being in substance accomplished, both law and priesthood fades away of itself and passes into air like a transitory vision, and the right of kings neither stands by any type nor falls. We acknowledge that the civil magistrate wears an authority of God's giving, and ought to be obeyed as his viceregent. But to make a king a type, we say is an abusive and unskilful speech, and of a moral solidity makes it seem a ceremonial shadow. Therefore your typical chain of king and priest must unlink. But is not the type of priest taken away by Christ's coming? "No," saith this famous protestant bishop of Winchester, "it is not, and he that saith it is, is an anabaptist." What think ye, readers? Do ye not understand him. What can be gathered hence, but that the prelate would still sacrifice? Conceive him, readers, he would missificate.<sup>50</sup> Their altars, indeed, were in a fair forwardness, and by such arguments as these they were setting up the molten calf of their mass again, and of their great hierarch the pope. For if the type of priest be not taken away, then neither of the high-priest, it were a strange beheading; and high-priest more than one there cannot be, and that one can be no less than a pope. And this doubtless was the bent of his career, though never so covertly. Yea, but there was something else in the high-priest besides the figure, as is plain by St. Paul's acknowledging him. 'Tis true that in the seventeenth of Deuteronomy,<sup>51</sup> whence this authority arises to the priest in matters too hard for the secular judges, as must

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<sup>50</sup> *missificate*: celebrate mass, which, in most communions, is regarded as a sacrifice. Archbishop Laud's regulation of the table in the chancel of English churches was resented by the Puritans as an attempt to make it approximate the altar of Roman Catholic churches.

<sup>51</sup> In Deuteronomy xvii, 8-13, the Hebrews are commanded, when personal quarrels become serious, to go to the priests or Levites for a "sentence of judgment." Exodus viii, 30, directed Aaron to wear Urim and Thummim, mysterious stones of judgment, in his breastplate as high priest; and in Deuteronomy xxxiii, 8, Urim and Thummim are mentioned as a charge of the tribe of Levi. When St. Paul was tried before the high priest, Ananias, he recognized him as "the ruler" of his people (Acts

needs be many in the occasions of those times involved so with ceremonial niceties, no wonder though it be commanded to inquire at the mouth of the priests, who besides the magistrates, their colleagues, had the oracle of urim to consult with. And whether the high-priest Ananias had not encroached beyond the limits of his priestly authority, or whether used it rightly, was no time then for St. Paul to contest about. But if this instance be able to assert any right of jurisdiction to the clergy, it must impart it in common to all ministers, since it were a great folly to seek for counsel in a hard intricate scruple from a dunce prelate, when there might be found a speedier solution from a grave and learned minister whom God hath gifted with the judgment of urim more amply oftentimes than all the prelates together; and now in the gospel hath granted the privilege of this oraculous ephod<sup>52</sup> alike to all his ministers. The reason, therefore, of imparity<sup>53</sup> in the priests, being now, as is aforesaid, really annulled both in their person and in their representative office, what right of jurisdiction soever can be from this place Levitically<sup>54</sup> bequeathed, must descend upon the ministers of the gospel equally, as it finds them in all other points equal. Well, then, he is finally content to let Aaron go. Eleazar<sup>55</sup> will serve his turn, as being a superior of superiors, and yet no type of Christ in Aaron's lifetime. O thou that wouldest wind into any figment or phantasm to save thy mitre! Yet all this will not fadge,<sup>56</sup> though it be

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xxiii, 5). Evidently the prelates stressed this passage, for in *The Nature of Episcopacy* (p. 9) Lord Brooke protested against such a precedent.

<sup>52</sup> The *ephod* and its "curious girdle" are described in Leviticus viii, 7, together with the breastplate of the high priest, which bore the Urim and Thummim.

<sup>53</sup> *imparity*: inequality. Cf. Introduction #28.

<sup>54</sup> *Leviticallly*: by the authority of the laws governing the Levites and priests in the book of Leviticus.

<sup>55</sup> When Aaron was ready to die, Moses was commanded to "strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son" (Num. xx, 26), who thereafter played a leading part as high priest in the migration of the Hebrews into Palestine. As the expected successor to the high priesthood, although he was not the oldest of Aaron's sons, Eleazar had been the superior of his brothers, all of whom were principal priests.

<sup>56</sup> *fadge*: fit or serve the purpose of the argument.

cunningly interpolated by some second hand with crooks and emendations: hear then, the type of Christ in some one particular, as of entering yearly into the holy of holies, and such-like, rested upon the high-priest only as more immediately personating our Saviour: but to resemble his whole satisfactory office<sup>57</sup> all the lineage of Aaron was no more than sufficient. And all or any of the priests, considered separately without relation to the highest, are but as a lifeless trunk and signify nothing. And this shows the excellence of Christ's sacrifice, who at once and in one person fulfilled that which many hundreds of priests many times repeating had enough to fore-show. What other imparity there was among themselves, we may safely suppose it depended on the dignity of their birth and family together with the circumstances of a carnal service, which might afford many priorities. And this I take to be the sum of what the bishop hath laid together to make plea for prelaty by imitation of the law: though indeed, if it may stand, it will infer popedom all as well. Many other courses he tries, enforcing himself with much ostentation of endless genealogies, as if he were the man that St. Paul fore-warns us of in Timothy,<sup>58</sup> but so unvigourously that I do not fear his winning of many to his cause, but such as doting upon great names are either over-weak or over-sudden of faith. I shall not refuse, therefore, to learn so much prudence as I find in the Roman soldier that attended the cross, not to stand breaking of legs when the breath is quite out of the body, but pass to that which follows. The Primate of Armagh,<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Christ's *satisfactory office* is his work of making satisfaction or amends to God by his sacrificial death for the sins of men. Of that, Milton says, all the sacrifices ever offered by Jewish priests were hardly a sufficient anti-type or symbol.

<sup>58</sup> In I Timothy i, 4, Paul warns Timothy not to "give heed to fables and endless genealogies." Milton applies the verse to the catalogues of bishops in the principal sees of the early church which Bishop Andrewes cited to justify episcopacy as an institution.

<sup>59</sup> *Armagh* was the see of Archbishop Ussher. Its claims to the primacy over Dublin were recognized by Wentworth after Ussher became archbishop. He was one of the most learned men in England, and was one of the most influential of the liberal bishops, never losing the respect of

at the beginning of his tractate, seeks to avail himself of that place in the sixty-sixth of Isaiah,<sup>60</sup> "I will take of them for priests and Levites, saith the Lord," to uphold hereby such a form of superiority among the ministers of the gospel, succeeding those in the law, as the Lord's-day did the sabbath. But certain if this method may be admitted of interpreting those prophetical passages concerning Christian times in a punctual correspondence, it may with equal probability be urged upon us that we are bound to observe some monthly solemnity answerable to the new moons, as well as the Lord's day which we keep in lieu of the sabbath: for in the twenty-third verse the prophet joins them in the same manner together, as before he did the priests and Levites, thus; "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Undoubtedly with as good consequence may it be alleged from hence that we are to solemnize some religious monthly meeting different from the sabbath, as from the other any distinct formality of ecclesiastical orders may be inferred. This rather will appear to be the lawful and unconstrained sense of the text, that God, in taking of them for priests and Levites, will not esteem them unworthy, though Gentiles, to undergo any function in the church, but will make of them a full and perfect ministry, as was that of the priests and Levites in their kind. And Bishop Andrews himself, to end the controversy, sends us a candid exposition of this quoted verse from the twenty-fourth page of his said book, plainly deciding that God, by those legal names there of priests and Levites, means our presbyters and deacons; for which either ingenuous confession or slip of his pen we give him thanks, and withal to him that brought these treatises into one volume, who, setting the contradictions of two learned men so

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Parliament, which invited him to sit with the Westminster Assembly in 1647, nor of Cromwell, to whom he pleaded with some success for the ejected Anglican clergy in 1656. For his tract in *Seven Briefe Treatises* cf. Introduction #26.

<sup>60</sup> The reference is to Isaiah lx, 21.

near together, did not foresee. What other deducements or analogies are cited out of St. Paul to prove a likeness between the ministers of the Old and New Testament, having tried their sinews, I judge they may pass without harm doing to our cause. We may remember then, that prelaty neither hath nor can have foundation in the law, nor yet in the gospel; which assertion, as being for the plainness thereof a matter of eyesight rather than of disquisition, I voluntarily omit; not forgetting to specify this note again, that the earnest desire which the prelates have to build their hierarchy upon the sandy bottom of the law, gives us to see abundantly the little assurance which they find to rear up their high roofs by the authority of the gospel, repulsed as it were from the writings of the apostles and driven to take sanctuary among the Jews. Hence that open confession of the primate before mentioned: "Episcopacy is fetched partly from the pattern of the Old Testament, and partly from the New as an imitation of the Old;" though nothing can be more rotten in divinity than such a position as this, and is all one as to say, "Episcopacy is partly of divine institution, and partly of man's own carving." For who gave the authority to fetch more from the pattern of the law than what the apostles had already fetched, if they fetched anything at all, as hath been proved they did not? So was Jeroboam's episcopacy<sup>61</sup> partly from the pattern of the law and partly from the pattern of his own carnality; a parti-colored and a parti-membered episcopacy, and what can this be less than a monstrous? Others therefore among the prelates, perhaps not so well able to brook or rather to justify this foul relapsing to the old law, have condescended at last to a plain confessing that both the names and offices of bishops and presbyters at first were the same, and in the scriptures nowhere distinguished. This grants the Remonstrant<sup>62</sup> in the fifth section of his *Defence*

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<sup>61</sup> Jeroboam's *episcopacy* is an allusion to King Jeroboam's abuse of his power to withdraw the ten northern tribes of Israel from worship in the temple at Jerusalem. He set up "calves of gold" at Dan and Bethel, and "made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi." (I Kings xii, 27-31.)

<sup>62</sup> The Remonstrant is Bishop Hall. Cf. Introduction #17 and 19.



and in the preface to his last short *Answer*. But what need respect be had whether he grant it or grant it not, whenas through all antiquity and even in the loftiest times of prelacy, we find it granted? Jerome,<sup>63</sup> the learnedest of the fathers, hides not his opinion that custom only, which the proverb calls a tyrant, was the maker of prelacy; before his audacious workmanship the churches were ruled in common by the presbyters; and such a certain truth this was esteemed that it became a decree among the papal canons compiled by Gratian.<sup>64</sup> Anselm also of Canterbury, who to uphold the points of his prelatism made himself a traitor to his country, yet, commenting the epistles to Titus and the Philippians,<sup>65</sup> acknowledges from the clearness of the text what Jerome and the church rubric hath before acknowledged. He little dreamed then that the weeding-hook of reformation would after two ages pluck up his glorious poppy<sup>66</sup> from insulting over the good corn. Though since, some of our British prelates, seeing themselves pressed to produce scripture, try all their cunning,

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<sup>63</sup> For the significance of this reference to St. Jerome cf. Introduction #25.

<sup>64</sup> The reference is to Gratian's *Decretum*, Pars I, Distinctio XCV, caput v, where it is plainly stated that a presbyter is the same as a bishop, and that it is solely by virtue of custom that bishops take precedence of priests. The *Decretum*, which was compiled about 1150 A.D., was acknowledged to be the greatest medieval codification of Canon Law. Milton took pleasure in citing Gratian here because the Puritans regarded him as "one of the Pope's favorites" (to use William Vaughan's phrase in *The Golden Fleece*, p. 90), but the citation is hardly fair, for Gratian fully sustains episcopacy, although (as Calvin points out, *Institutes* IV, iv, 13) he recognized that under the Roman Empire the clergy shared the right to elect bishops with the emperors and nobles and, under proper safeguards, with the people.

<sup>65</sup> No commentary on Titus or Philippians by St. Anselm of Canterbury (cf. Introduction #21) is known. Dom Anselm Strittmatter suggests that Milton refers here to the *Commentary* of Herveus Burgidolensis (1080-1150?), which was published as by Anselm of Canterbury at Cologne in 1533 and 1612, at Paris in 1533 and 1549, and at Venice in 1547. In his commentary on Titus, Herveus says that "a bishop and a presbyter are the same," and in general his discussion confirms the passage of Jerome to which Milton refers. Cf. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus* (Series Secunda) CLXXXI, p. 1481.

<sup>66</sup> The *poppy . . . insulting over the good corn* is an allusion to the parable of the tares and the wheat (Matt. xiii, 24-30).

if the New Testament will not help them, to frame of their own heads, as it were with wax, a kind of mimic bishop limned out to the life of a dead priesthood. Or else they would strain us out a certain figurative prelate by wringing the collective allegory of those seven angels<sup>67</sup> into seven single rochets.<sup>68</sup> Howsoever, since it thus appears that custom was the creator of prelacy, being less ancient than the government of presbyters, it is an extreme folly to give them the hearing that tell us of bishops through so many ages: and if against their tedious muster of citations, sees, and successions, it be replied that wagers and church antiquities, such as are repugnant to the plain dictate of scripture, are both alike the arguments of fools, they have their answer. We rather are to cite all those ages to an arraignment before the word of God, wherefore, and what pretending, how presuming they durst alter that divine institution of presbyters, which the apostles, who were no various and inconstant men, surely had set up in the churches; and why they choose to live by custom and catalogue, or, as St. Paul saith, by sight and visibility, rather than by faith?<sup>69</sup> But first I conclude from their own mouths that God's command in scripture, which doubtless ought to be the first and greatest reason of church government, is wanting to prelacy. And certainly we have plenteous warrant in the doctrine of Christ to determine that the want of this reason is of itself sufficient to confute all other pretences that may be brought in favor of it.

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<sup>67</sup> For *those seven angels* cf. Introduction #27.

<sup>68</sup> *rochets*: "a close-fitting linen vestment resembling the surplice, but having close sleeves reaching to the hands, worn especially by bishops and abbots." (Webster.)

<sup>69</sup> "For we walk by faith, and not by sight" (II Cor. v, 7).

## CHAPTER VI.

*That Prelaty was not set up for Prevention of Schism, as is pretended, or if it were, that it performs not what it was first set up for, but quite the contrary.*

YET because it hath the outside of a specious reason, and specious things we know are aptest to work with human lightness and frailty, even against the solidest truth that sounds not plausibly, let us think it worth the examining for the love of infirmer Christians, of what importance this their second reason may be. Tradition they say hath taught them that, for the prevention of growing schism, the bishop was heaved above the presbyter. And must tradition then ever thus to the world's end be the perpetual cankerworm to eat out God's commandments? Are his decrees so inconsiderate and so fickle that when the statutes of Solon or Lycurgus<sup>70</sup> shall prove durably good to many ages, his in forty years shall be found defective, ill-contrived, and for needful causes to be altered? Our Saviour and his apostles did not only foresee, but foretell and forewarn us to look for schism. Is it a thing to be imagined of God's wisdom, or at least of apostolic prudence, to set up such a government in the tenderness of the church as should incline, or not be more able than any other to oppose itself to schism? It was well known what a bold lurker schism was even in the household of Christ, between his own disciples and those of John the Baptist, about fasting;<sup>71</sup> and early in the Acts of the Apostles the noise of schism had almost drowned the proclaiming of the gospel; yet we read not in scripture that any thought was had of making prelates, no, not in those places where dissension was most rife. If prelaty had been

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<sup>70</sup> For Solon and Lycurgus cf. Introduction #12, *Of Education*, footnote 73, and note 16 above.

<sup>71</sup> In Matthew ix, 14-15, Christ justifies his disciples for not fasting when the disciples of John raise that question. The protests of the Jewish Christians against Peter's mission to the gentiles (Acts xi, 2-4) led to his account of the vision of the sheet full of unclean beasts let down from heaven, to which Milton refers in Book II, iii, below.

then esteemed a remedy against schism, where was it more needful than in that great variance among the Corinthians which St. Paul<sup>72</sup> so labored to reconcile? And whose eye could have found the fittest remedy sooner than his? And what could have made the remedy more available, than to have used it speedily? And, lastly, what could have been more necessary than to have written it for our instruction? Yet we see he neither commended it to us nor used it himself. For the same division remaining there, or else bursting forth again more than twenty years after St. Paul's death, we find in Clement's epistle,<sup>73</sup> of venerable authority, written to the yet factious Corinthians, that they were still governed by presbyters. And the same of other churches out of Hermas,<sup>74</sup> and divers other the scholars of the apostles, by the late industry of the learned Salmasius appears.<sup>75</sup> Neither yet did this worthy Clement, St. Paul's disciple, though writing to them to lay aside schism, in the least word advise them to change the presbyterial government into prelacy. And therefore if God afterward gave or permitted this insurrection of episcopacy, it

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<sup>72</sup> In I Corinthians i, 11, Paul protests against the "contentions" in the Church in Corinth.

<sup>73</sup> Clement became Bishop of Rome 92 A.D. and wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians 96. He argued for an organization of the church on the general pattern of the Levitical temple worship, but he did use the terms *presbyter* and *bishop* without clear distinction. The authority of the epistle rested largely on its classic picture of order on land, sea, and in the starry heavens, and even in the legions of the empire, as a model for discipline in the Church.

<sup>74</sup> Hermas, who was bishop at Rome 140-50 A.D., is the supposed author of *The Book of the Visions*, better known as *The Shepherd*. In the principal vision of the Shepherd, or Angel of Repentance, the Church is described as a tower of exactly fitting stones, which represent the apostles, doctors, bishops, and other clergy. The spirit of the work is poetical and devotional to a degree comparable with that of *The Vision of Piers Plowman*.

<sup>75</sup> Salmasius, or Claude de Saumaise (1588-1658), the author of *Regii Sanguinis Clamor* (*The Cry of the Royal Blood*) to which Milton's *Defence of the English People* replied in 1651, began his career in 1608 with a scholarly work on the Papacy and in 1641 published the work to which Milton refers here, *De episcopis et presbyteris* (*On Bishops and Presbyters*) at Leyden. He was primarily a scholar, and his greatest work was *Pliniae exercitationes in Caii Julii Solini Polyhistoria*, 1629.

is to be feared he did it in his wrath, as he gave the Israelites a king. With so good a will doth he use to alter his own chosen government once established. For mark whether this rare device of man's brain thus preferred before the ordinance of God, had better success than fleshly wisdom not counselling with God is wont to have. So far was it from removing schism, that if schism parted the congregations before, now it rent and mangled, now it raged. Heresy begat heresy with a certain monstrous haste of pregnancy in her birth, at once born and bringing forth. Contentions before brotherly were now hostile. Men went to choose their bishop as they went to a pitched field, and the day of his election was like the sack-ing of a city, sometimes ended with the blood of thousands. Nor this among heretics only, but men of the same belief, yea confessors, and that with such odious ambition that Eusebius,<sup>76</sup> in his eighth book, testifies he abhorred to write. And the reason is not obscure, for the poor dignity or rather burden of a parochial presbyter could not engage any great party, nor that to any deadly feud: but prelaty was a power of that extent and sway, that if her election were popular, it was seldom not the cause of some faction or broil in the church. But if her dignity came by favor of some prince, she was from that time his creature and obnoxious<sup>77</sup> to comply with his ends in state, were they right or wrong. So that instead of finding prelaty an impeacher of schism or faction, the more I search, the more I grow into all persuasion to think rather that faction and she, as with a spousal ring, are wedded together, never to be divorced. But here let every one behold the just and dreadful judgment of God meeting with the audacious pride of man

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<sup>76</sup> The ecclesiastical historian Eusebius of Caesarea (Eusebius Pamphili, ?260–340 A.D.) devoted the eighth book of his *Ecclesiastical History* to the persecution of the Christians under the emperor Diocletian. The first chapter describes the previous decay of the Church, when factions armed themselves with “the armour of spite and sharpe speares of opprobrious wordes; so that Bishops against Bishops, and people against people, rayseed sedition.” (Meredith Hammer’s translation, London, 1585; p. 145.)

<sup>77</sup> *obnoxious*: under obligation.

that durst offer to mend the ordinances of heaven. God, out of the strife of men, brought forth by his apostles to the church that beneficent and ever-distributing office of deacons, the stewards and ministers of holy alms: man, out of the pretended care of peace and unity, being caught in the snare of his impious boldness to correct the will of Christ, brought forth to himself upon the church that irreconcilable schism of perdition and apostacy, the Roman antichrist; for that the exaltation of the pope arose out of the reason of prelaty, it cannot be denied. And as I noted before that the pattern of the high-priest pleaded for in the gospel, (for take away the head priest, the rest are but a carcase,) sets up with better reason a pope than an archbishop, for if prelaty must still rise and rise till it come to a primate, why should it stay there? Whenas the catholic government is not to follow the division of kingdoms, the temple best representing the universal church and the high-priest the universal head; so I observe here, that if to quiet schism there must be one head of prelaty in a land or monarchy, rising from a provincial to a national primacy, there may upon better grounds of repressing schism be set up one catholic head over the catholic church. For the peace and good of the church is not terminated in the schismless estate of one or two kingdoms, but should be provided for by the joint consultation of all reformed Christendom: that all controversy may end in the final pronounce or canon of one archprimate or protestant pope; although by this means, for aught I see, all the diameters of schism may as well meet and be knit up in the centre of one grand falsehood. Now let all impartial men arbitrate what goodly inference these two main reasons of the prelates have, that by a natural league of consequence make more for the pope than for themselves; yea, to say more home, are the very womb for a new subantichrist to breed in, if it be not rather the old force and power of the same man of sin counterfeiting protestant. It was not the prevention of schism, but it was schism itself, and the hateful thirst of lording in the church, that first bestowed a being upon prelaty; this was the true cause, but the pretence is still the same. The prelates,

as they would have it thought, are the only mauls<sup>78</sup> of schism.<sup>79</sup> Forsooth if they be put down, a deluge of innumerable sects will follow; we shall be all Brownists,<sup>80</sup> Familists,<sup>81</sup> Anabaptists.<sup>82</sup> For the word Puritan seems to be quashed, and all that heretofore were counted such, are now Brownists. And thus do they raise an evil report upon the expected reforming grace that God hath bid us hope for; like those faithless spies<sup>83</sup> whose carcasses shall perish in the wilderness of their own confused ignorance and never taste the good of reformation. Do they keep away schism? If to bring a numb and chill stupidity of soul, an unactive blindness of mind upon the people by their leaden doctrine, or no doctrine at all, if to persecute all knowing and zealous Christians by the violence of their courts be to keep away schism, they keep away schism indeed: and by this kind of discipline all Italy and Spain is as purely and politicly kept from schism as England hath been by them. With as good a plea might the dead-palsy boast to a man. "'Tis I that free you from stitches and pains, and the troublesome feeling of cold and heat, of wounds and

<sup>78</sup> *mauls*: heavy hammers for crushing or breaking purposes.

<sup>79</sup> The parallelism between Milton's charge that the bishops were the greatest schismatics in England and the similar charge in Lord Brooke's *A Discourse opening the Nature of that Episcopacie, Which is Exercised in Englande* is studied by Professor Whiting in *Milton's Literary Milieu*, pp. 302-10.

<sup>80</sup> The central doctrine of the followers of Robert Brown (1550?-1633?) was the independency of all congregations. The first permanently established Congregational Church in England seems to have been that founded by Henry Jacob in Southwark in 1616, which formally invited the adherence of "Brownists" everywhere. As Congregationalism and Independency spread, their enemies stressed their sectarian character by calling them "Brownisms."

<sup>81</sup> The *Familists* spread from Holland to England about 1575 and until the Civil Wars were constantly attacked for the supposed immorality of their belief in brotherly love as the first Christian virtue. The popular prejudice against them is represented by Thomas Middleton's *The Familie of Love* (1607) and by *A description of the sect called the Family of Love . . . discovered by one Mrs. Susanna Snow* (1641).

<sup>82</sup> *Anabaptists*: cf. note 45 above.

<sup>83</sup> The cowardice of the spies who were sent into Canaan by Moses (Num. xiii-xiv) and reported that the inhabitants of the land were too strong for the Israelites to attempt an invasion, was proverbial among the Puritans.

strokes: if I were gone, all these would molest you." The winter might as well vaunt itself against the spring, "I destroy all noisome and rank weeds, I keep down all pestilent vapours." Yes, and all wholesome herbs and all fresh dews, by your violent and hide-bound frost: but when the gentle west winds shall open the fruitful bosom of the earth, thus overgirded by your imprisonment, then the flowers put forth and spring, and then the sun shall scatter the mists, and the manuring hand of the tiller shall root up all that burdens the soil without thank to your bondage. But far worse than any frozen captivity is the bondage of prelates, for that other, if it keep down anything which is good within the earth, so doth it likewise that which is ill; but these let out freely the ill and keep down the good, or else keep down the lesser ill and let out the greatest. Be ashamed at last to tell the parliament ye curb schismatics, whenas they know ye cherish and side with papists and are now as it were one party with them, and 'tis said they help to petition for ye. Can we believe that your government strains in good earnest at the petty gnats<sup>84</sup> of schism, whenas we see it makes nothing to swallow the camel heresy of Rome, but that indeed your throats are of the right pharisaical strain? Where are those schismatics with whom the prelates hold such hot skirmish? Show us your acts, those glorious annals which your courts of loathed memory lately deceased have left us? Those schismatics I doubt me will be found the most of them such as whose only schism was to have spoke the truth against your high abominations and cruelties in the church; this is the schism ye hate most, the removal of your criminous hierarchy. A politic government of yours, and of a pleasant conceit, set up to remove those as a pretended schism, that would remove you as a palpable heresy in government. If the schism would pardon ye that, she might go jagged in as many cuts and slashes as she pleased for you. As for the rending of the church, we have many reasons to think it is not that which ye labor to prevent, so much as the rending of your pontifical

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<sup>84</sup> Christ called the Pharisees "blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." (Matt. xxiii, 24.)



sleeves: that schism would be the sorest schism to you; that would be Brownism and Anabaptism indeed. If we go down, say you, (as if Adrian's wall<sup>85</sup> were broke,) a flood of sects will rush in. What sects? What are their opinions? Give us the inventory. It will appear both by your former prosecutions and your present instances, that they are only such to speak of as are offended with your lawless government, your ceremonies, your liturgy, an extract of the mass-book translated. But that they should be contemners of public prayer and churches used without superstition, I trust God will manifest it ere long to be as false a slander as your former slanders against the Scots.<sup>86</sup> Noise it till ye be hoarse that a rabble of sects will come in; it will be answered ye, "No rabble, sir priest, but a unanimous multitude of good protestants will then join to the church, which now because of you stand separated. This will be the dreadful consequence of your removal. As for those terrible names of sectaries and schismatics which ye have got together, we know your manner of fight, when the quiver of your arguments, which is ever thin and weakly stored, after the first brunt is quite empty, your course is to betake ye to your other quiver of slander, wherein lies your best archery. And whom you could not move by sophistical arguing, them you think to confute by scandalous misnaming; thereby inciting the blinder sort of people to dislike and deride sound doctrine and good Christianity under two or three vile and hateful terms. But if we could easily endure and dissolve your doughtiest reasons in argument, we shall more easily bear the worst of your unreasonableness in calumny and false report: especially being foretold by Christ, that if he our master were by your predecessors called Samaritan and Beelzebub,<sup>87</sup> we must not think it strange if his best

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<sup>85</sup> In Book II of his *History of Britain* Milton describes Hadrian's Wall as made "with great stakes driv'n in deep, and fastn'd together, in manner of a strong mound, 80 mile in length, to divide what was *Roman* from *Barbarian*: . . . between *Solway Frith* and *Carlile*."

<sup>86</sup> The bishops' attacks on the Scots had ended after the Second Bishops' War. Cf. Introduction #16 and 17.

<sup>87</sup> "And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath

disciples in the reformation, as at first by those of your tribe they were called Lollards<sup>88</sup> and Hussites, so now by you be termed Puritans and Brownists." But my hope is that the people of England will not suffer themselves to be juggled thus out of their faith and religion by a mist of names cast before their eyes, but will search wisely by the scriptures and look quite through this fraudulent aspersion of a disgraceful name into the things themselves: knowing that the primitive Christians in their times were accounted such as are now called Familists and Adamites,<sup>89</sup> or worse. And many on the prelatist side, like the church of Sardis,<sup>90</sup> have a name to live and yet are dead; to be protestants, and are indeed papists in most of their principles. Thus persuaded, this your old fallacy we shall soon unmask and quickly apprehend how you prevent schism, and who are your schismatics. But what if ye prevent and hinder all good means of preventing schism? That way which the apostles used, was to call a council: from which, by anything that can be learned from the fifteenth of the Acts, no faithful Christian was debarred, to whom knowledge and piety might give entrance. Of such a council as this every parochial consistory<sup>91</sup> is a right homogeneous and constituting part, being in itself as it were a little synod, and towards a general assembly moving upon her own basis in an even and firm progression, as those smaller squares in battle

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Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils." (Mark iii, 22.)

<sup>88</sup> *Lollards* was the name given to the followers of the fourteenth century reformer, John Wycliff, possession of whose books was forbidden by a bull of Pope Alexander V in 1409. The spread of Wycliff's doctrines on the Continent owed much to the Bohemian, John Huss, who was burned in 1415.

<sup>89</sup> The Adamites were a branch of the Anabaptists who were at least popularly supposed to practice nudity.

<sup>90</sup> "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; . . . I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." (Rev. iii, 1. Cf. Introduction #27.)

<sup>91</sup> *Consistory*: official assembly of the church. Presbyterian organization united the churches in small groups by parishes and culminated in synods representing large territories, known as provinces, with a general, national assembly, like the modern General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, at the top.

unite in one great cube, the main phalanx, an emblem of truth and steadfastness. Whereas on the other side, prelaty ascending by a gradual monarchy from bishop to archbishop, from thence to primate, and from thence, for there can be no reason yielded neither in nature nor in religion wherefore, if it have lawfully mounted thus high, it should not be a lordly ascendant in the horoscope of the church, from primate to patriarch, and so to pope: I say, prelaty thus ascending in a continual pyramid upon pretence to perfect the church's unity, if notwithstanding it be found most needful, yea, the utmost help to darn up the rents of schism by calling a council, what does it but teach us that prelaty is of no force to effect this work, which she boasts to be her masterpiece, and that her pyramid aspires and sharpens to ambition, not to perfection or unity? This we know, that as often as any great schism disparts the church and synods be proclaimed, the presbyters have as great right there and as free vote of old as the bishops, which the canon law conceals not. So that prelaty, if she will seek to close up divisions in the church, must be forced to dissolve and unmake her own pyramidal figure, which she affirms to be of such uniting power, whenas indeed it is the most dividing and schismatical form that geometricians know of, and must be fain to inglobe or incube herself among the presbyters; which she hating to do, sends her haughty prelates from all parts with their forked mitres, the badge of schism, or the stamp of his cloven foot whom they serve I think, who, according to their hierarchies acuminating still higher and higher in a cone of prelaty, instead of healing up the gashes of the church, as it happens in such pointed bodies meeting, fall to gore one another with their sharp spires for upper place and precedence, till the council itself prove the greatest schism of all. And thus they are so far from hindering dissension that they have made unprofitable, and even noisome, the chiefest remedy we have to keep Christendom at one, which is by councils: and these, if we rightly consider apostolic example, are nothing else but general presbyteries. This seemed so far from the apostles to think much of, as if

hereby their dignity were impaired, that, as we may gather by those epistles of Peter and John, which are likely to be latest written, when the church grew to a settling, like those heroic patricians of Rome<sup>92</sup> (if we may use such comparison) hasting to lay down their dictatorship, they rejoiced to call themselves and to be as fellow-elders among their brethren; knowing that their high office was but as the scaffolding of the church yet unbuilt, and would be but a troublesome disfigurement so soon as the building was finished. But the lofty minds of an age or two after, such was their small discerning, thought it a poor indignity that the high-reared government of the church should so on a sudden, as it seemed to them, squat into a presbytery. Next, or rather before councils, the timeliest prevention of schism is to preach the gospel abundantly and powerfully throughout all the land, to instruct the youth religiously, to endeavor how the scriptures may be easiest understood by all men; to all which the proceedings of these men have been on set purpose contrary. But how, O prelates, should you remove schism, and how should you not remove and oppose all the means of removing schism? When prelacy is a schism itself from the most reformed and most flourishing of our neighbour churches abroad and a sad subject of discord and offence to the whole nation at home. The remedy which you allege, is the very disease we groan under and never can be to us a remedy but by removing itself. Your predecessors were believed to assume this pre-eminence above their brethren only that they might appease dissension. Now God and the church calls upon you for the same reason to lay it down, as being to thousands of good men offensive, burdensome, intolerable. Surrender that pledge which, unless you foully usurped it, the church gave you and now claims it again for the reason she first lent it. Discharge the trust committed to you, prevent schism; and that ye can never do,

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<sup>92</sup> Milton thought of Romans like L. Quintus Cincinnatus, who was called from the plough to be dictator in 458 B.C., and in sixteen days saved an army which had been trapped by the Aequians, resigned his power, and went back to his farm.

but by discharging yourselves. That government which ye hold, we confess, prevents much, hinders much, removes much: but what? the schisms and grievances of the church? no, but all the peace and unity, all the welfare not of the church alone, but of the whole kingdom. And if it be still permitted ye to hold, will cause the most sad, I know not whether separation be enough to say, but such a wide gulf of distraction in this land as will never close her dismal gap until ye be forced (for of yourselves you will never do as that Roman Curtius<sup>93</sup> nobly did) for the church's peace and your country's to leap into the midst and be no more seen. By this we shall know whether yours be that ancient prelaty, which you say was first constituted for the reducement of quiet and unanimity into the church, for then you will not delay to prefer that above your own preferment. If otherwise, we must be confident that your prelaty is nothing else but your ambition, an insolent preferring of yourselves above your brethren; and all your learned scraping in antiquity, even to disturb the bones of old Aaron and his sons in their graves, is but to maintain and set upon our necks a stately and severe dignity, which you call sacred, and is nothing in very deed but a grave and reverend gluttony, a sanctimonious avarice; in comparison of which, all the duties and dearnesses which ye owe to God or to his church, to law, custom, or nature, ye have resolved to set at nought. I could put you in mind what counsel Clement, a fellow-laborer with the apostles, gave to the presbyters of Corinth, whom the people, though unjustly, sought to remove. "Who among you," saith he, "is noble-minded, who is pitiful, who is charitable, let him say thus, 'If for me this sedition, this enmity, these differences be, I willingly depart, I go my ways; only let the flock of Christ be at peace with the presbyters that are set over it.' He that shall do

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<sup>93</sup> Mettius Curtius was supposed, when a chasm opened in the Roman forum in 362 B.C., which soothsayers said could be closed only by a sacrifice of the city's greatest treasure, to have offered himself, as a symbol of the courage which he said was Rome's greatest treasure, and to have caused the closing up of the abyss by riding into it on horseback and disappearing forever.

this," saith he, "shall get him great honor in the Lord, and all places will receive him."<sup>94</sup> This was Clement's counsel to good and holy men, that they should depart rather from their just office than by their stay to ravel out the seamless garment of concord in the church. But I have better counsel to give the prelates and far more acceptable to their ears; this advice in my opinion is fitter for them: Cling fast to your pontifical sees, bate not, quit yourselves like barons, stand to the utmost for your haughty courts and votes in parliament. Still tell us that you prevent schism, though schism and combustion be the very issue of your bodies, your first-born; and set your country a bleeding in a prelatical mutiny to fight for your pomp, and that ill-favored weed of temporal honor, that sits dishonorably upon your laïc shoulders, that ye may be fat and fleshy, swoln with high thoughts and big with mischievous designs, when God comes to visit upon you all this fourscore years vexation of his church under your Egyptian tyranny. For certainly of all those blessed souls which you have persecuted and those miserable ones which you have lost, the just vengeance does not sleep.

## CHAPTER VII.

*That those many Sects and Schisms by some supposed to be among us, and that rebellion in Ireland, ought not to be a hindrance, but a hastening of Reformation.*

AS FOR those many sects and divisions rumored abroad to be amongst us, it is not hard to perceive that they are partly the mere fictions and false alarms of the prelates, thereby to cast amazements and panic terrors into the hearts of weaker Christians, that they should not venture to change the present deformity of the church for fear of I know not what worse inconveniencies. With the same objected fears and suspi-

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<sup>94</sup> A free translation of Clement's I *Corinthians*, xxii, 14-15. Cf. note 73 above.

cions, we know that subtle prelate Gardner<sup>95</sup> sought to divert the first reformation. It may suffice us to be taught by St. Paul, that there must be sects for the manifesting of those that are sound hearted. These are but winds and flaws to try the floating vessel of our faith, whether it be stanch and sail well, whether our ballast be just, our anchorage and cable strong. By this is seen who lives by faith and certain knowledge, and who by credulity and the prevailing opinion of the age; whose virtue is of an unchangeable grain, and whose of a slight wash. If God come to try our constancy, we ought not to shrink or stand the less firmly for that, but pass on with more steadfast resolution to establish the truth, though it were through a lane of sects and heresies on each side. Other things men do to the glory of God: but sects' and errors, it seems, God suffers to be for the glory of good men, that the world may know and reverence their true fortitude and undaunted constancy in the truth. Let us not therefore make these things an incumbrance or an excuse of our delay in reforming, which God sends us as an incitement to proceed with more honor and alacrity. For if there were no opposition, where were the trial of an unfeigned goodness and magnanimity? Virtue that wavers is not virtue, but vice revolted from itself and after a while returning. The actions of just and pious men do not darken in their middle course, but Solomon tells us they are as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.<sup>96</sup> But if we shall suffer the trifling doubts and jealousies of future sects to overcloud the fair beginnings of purposed reformation, let us rather fear that another proverb of the same wise man be not upbraided to us, that "the way of the wicked is as darkness, they stumble at they know not what." If sects and schisms be turbulent in the unsettled estate of a church, while it lies under

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<sup>95</sup> Stephen Gardiner (1483?-1555), Bishop of Winchester, was an astute opponent of the reformers in the latter years of Henry VIII, and under Mary, as Lord Chancellor, he was active in securing the legislation under which a number of Protestants suffered.

<sup>96</sup> The words paraphrase Proverbs iv, 18. Immediately following in the text verse 19 is quoted.

the amending hand, it best beseems our Christian courage to think they are but as the throes and pangs that go before the birth of reformation, and that the work itself is now in doing. For if we look but on the nature of elemental and mixed things, we know they cannot suffer any change of one kind or quality into another without the struggle of contrarieties.<sup>97</sup> And in things artificial, seldom any elegance is wrought without a superfluous waste and refuse in the transaction. No marble statue can be politely carved, no fair edifice built, without almost as much rubbish and sweeping. Insomuch that even in the spiritual conflict of St. Paul's conversion,<sup>98</sup> there fell scales from his eyes, that were not perceived before. No wonder then in the reforming of a church, which is never brought to effect without the fierce encounter of truth and falsehood together, if, as it were the splinters and shares of so violent a jousting, there fall from between the shock many fond errors and fanatic opinions, which, when truth has the upper hand, and the reformation shall be perfected, will easily be rid out of the way or kept so low, as that they shall be only the exercise of our knowledge, not the disturbance or interruption of our faith. As for that which Barclay<sup>99</sup> in his *Image of Minds* writes concerning the horrible and barbarous conceits

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<sup>97</sup> Tradition made "The earth, the ayre, the water, and the fyre" mutually hostile to the point of conspiring

Each against other, by all meanes they may,  
Threatening their owne confusion and decay.

(Spenser, *Hymne in Honour of Love*, 78-82.)

<sup>98</sup> When, after St. Paul was struck blind on the road to Damascus, his conversion became complete, "scales as it were fell from his eyes." (Acts ix, 18.)

<sup>99</sup> John Barclay (1582-1621), a Gallicized Scot, author of *Argenis*, and a Catholic, satirized the Jesuits as severely as the English. He published his *Icon Animorum* in 1614. The book is a superficial survey of various national characteristics. In religion, it says, the English "run ever into extremes." They are divided by their pride "into divers sects and names; and have divers Lawes and rites established among them, neither by the authority of the men or the number of them, but onely by wilful obstinacy; and that which is most worthy of pity and laughter is this, that with cruell censure these sects doe persecute one another: holding that they onely are the children of God, and all other reprobates." (*The Mirrour of Mindes*, Englished by T. May, London, 1631, pp. 120-1.)



of Englishmen in their religion, I deem it spoken like what he was, a fugitive papist traducing the island whence he sprung. It may be more judiciously gathered from hence that the Englishman of many other nations is least atheistical and bears a natural disposition of much reverence and awe towards the Deity; but in his weakness and want of better instruction, which among us too frequently is neglected, especially by the meaner sort, turning the bent of his own wits, with a scrupulous and ceaseless care, what he might do to inform himself aright of God and his worship, he may fall not unlikely sometimes, as any other landman,<sup>100</sup> into an uncouth opinion. And verily if we look at his native towardliness in the roughcast without breeding, some nation or other may haply be better composed to a natural civility and right judgment than he. But if he get the benefit once of a wise and well-rectified nurture, which must first come in general from the godly vigilance of the church, I suppose that wherever mention is made of countries, manners, or men, the English people, among the first that shall be praised, may deserve to be accounted a right pious, right honest; and right hardy nation. But thus while some stand dallying and deferring to reform for fear of that which should mainly hasten them forward, lest schism and error should increase, we may now thank ourselves and our delays, if instead of schism a bloody and inhuman rebellion be struck in between our slow movings. Indeed against violent and powerful opposition there can be no just blame of a lingering dispatch. But this I urge against those that discourse it for a maxim, as if the swift opportunities of establishing or reforming religion were to attend upon the phlegm of state-business. In state many things at first are crude and hard to digest, which only time and deliberation can supple and concoct. But in religion, wherein is no immaturity, nothing out of season, it goes far otherwise. The door of grace turns upon smooth hinges, wide opening to send out, but soon shutting to recall the precious offers of mercy to a nation: which, unless Watchfulness and Zeal, two quicksighted

<sup>100</sup> *other landman*: citizen of any other country.

and ready-handed virgins, be there in our behalf to receive, we lose: and still the oftener we lose, the straiter<sup>101</sup> the door opens, and the less is offered. This is all we get by demurring in God's service. 'Tis not rebellion that ought to be the hindrance of reformation, but it is the want of this which is the cause of that. The prelates which boast themselves the only bridlers of schism, God knows have been so cold and backward both there and with us to repress heresy and idolatry, that either through their carelessness or their craft, all this mischief is befallen. What can the Irish subject do less in God's just displeasure against us than revenge upon English bodies the little care that our prelates have had of their souls? Nor hath their negligence been new in that island, but ever notorious in Queen Elizabeth's days, as Camden,<sup>102</sup> their known friend, forbears not to complain. Yet so little are they touched with remorse of these their cruelties, for these cruelties are theirs, the bloody revenge of those souls which they have famished, that whenas against our brethren the Scots, who by their upright and loyal deeds have now bought themselves an honorable name to posterity, whatsoever malice by slander could invent, rage in hostility attempt, they greedily attempted; toward these murderous Irish, the enemies of God and mankind, a cursed offspring of their own connivance, no man takes notice but that they seem to be very calmly and indifferently affected. Where then should we begin to extinguish a rebellion that hath his cause from the misgovernment of the church? Where but at the church's reformation and the

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<sup>101</sup> *straiter*: the more narrowly.

<sup>102</sup> In his *Life of Milton* II, 310-4, Masson has a documented account of the suffering of the English in Ulster at this time. Current opinion blamed the revolt upon the failure of the Anglican authorities to convert the Irish, and agreed with Camden when he wrote: "So firmly doth this nation persevere in the old religion of their forefathers, which the careless negligence of their prelates and ignorance together, hath beyond all measure encreased, whenas there be none to instruct and teach them otherwise." *Britain, or A Chorographicall Description of the kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Ilands adjoining out of the depth of Antiquitie*. Translated by Philemon Holland, London, 1610. Division of Scotland and Ireland, p. 82.

removal of that government which pursues and wars with all good Christians under the name of schismatics, but maintains and fosters all papists and idolaters as tolerable Christians? And if the sacred Bible may be our light, we are neither without example nor the witness of God himself, that the corrupted estate of the church is both the cause of tumult and civil wars, and that to stint them, the peace of the church must first be settled. "Now for a long season," saith Azariah to King Asa,<sup>103</sup> "Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: and in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city, for God did vex them with all adversity. Be ye strong therefore," saith he to the reformers of that age, "and let not your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded." And in those prophets that lived in the times of reformation after the captivity, often doth God stir up the people to consider that, while establishment of church-matters was neglected and put off, there "was no peace to him that went out or came in; for I," saith God, "had set all men every one against his neighbour."<sup>104</sup> But from the very day forward that they went seriously and effectually about the welfare of the church, he tells them that they themselves might perceive the sudden change of things into a prosperous and peaceful condition. But it will here be said that the reformation is a long work, and the miseries of Ireland are urgent of a speedy redress. They be indeed; and how speedy we are, the poor afflicted remnant of our martyred countrymen that sit there on the seashore, counting the hours of our delay with their sighs and the minutes with their falling tears, perhaps with the distilling of their bloody wounds, if they have not quite by this time cast off and almost cursed the vain hope of our foundered ships and

<sup>103</sup> This prophecy (II Chron. xv, 3-7) was made when Asa was returning from the rout of "an host of a thousand thousand" Ethiopians. Asa responded by putting away "the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin."

<sup>104</sup> Zechariah viii, 10.

aids, can best judge how speedy we are to their relief. But let their succors be hasted, as all need and reason is, and let not therefore the reformation, which is the chiefest cause of success and victory, be still procrastinated. They of the captivity in their greatest extremities could find both counsel and hands enough at once to build and to expect the enemy's assault. And we, for our parts, a populous and mighty nation, must needs be fallen into a strange plight either of effeminacy or confusion, if Ireland, that was once the conquest of one single earl with his private forces and the small assistance of a petty Kernish prince,<sup>105</sup> should now take up all the wisdom and prowess of this potent monarchy to quell a barbarous crew of rebels, whom, if we take but the right course to subdue, that is beginning at the reformation of our church, their own horrid murders and rapes will so fight against them that the very sutlers<sup>106</sup> and horse-boys of the camp will be able to rout and chase them without the staining of any noble sword. To proceed by other method in this enterprise, be our captains and commanders never so expert, will be as great an error in the art of war as any novice in soldiership ever committed. And thus I leave it as a declared truth that neither the fear of sects, no nor rebellion, can be a fit plea to stay reformation, but rather to push it forward with all possible diligence and speed.

## THE SECOND BOOK.

How HAPPY were it for this frail and, as it may be truly called, mortal life of man, since all earthly things which have the name of good and convenient in our daily use, are withal so cumbersome and full of trouble, if knowledge, yet which is the best and lightest possession of the mind, were, as the common saying is, no burden, and that what it wanted

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<sup>105</sup> Richard FitzGilbert de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, known to the Irish as "Strongbow," landed at Waterford in 1170 to support Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, and prepared for the subjugation of the greater part of the island in 1171 by Henry II.

<sup>106</sup> *sutlers*: traders following an army to serve it as a modern quartermaster's corps would do.

of being a load to any part of the body, it did not with a heavy advantage overlay upon the spirit! For not to speak of that knowledge that rests in the contemplation of natural causes and dimensions,<sup>107</sup> which must needs be a lower wisdom, as the object is low, certain it is that he who hath obtained in more than the scantest measure to know anything distinctly of God and of his true worship, and what is infallibly good and happy in the state of man's life, what in itself evil and miserable, though vulgarly not so esteemed—he that hath obtained to know this, the only high valuable wisdom indeed, remembering also that God even to a strictness requires the improvement of these his entrusted gifts,<sup>108</sup> cannot but sustain a sorer burden of mind, and more pressing, than any supportable toil or weight which the body can labor under, how and in what manner he shall dispose and employ those sums of knowledge and illumination which God hath sent him into this world to trade with. And that which aggravates the burden more is that (having received amongst his allotted parcels certain precious truths of such an orient<sup>109</sup> lustre as no diamond can equal, which nevertheless he has in charge to put off at any cheap rate, yea for nothing to them that will) the great merchants of this world, fearing that this course would soon discover and disgrace the false glitter of their deceitful wares wherewith they abuse the people, like poor Indians with beads and glasses, practise by all means how they may suppress the venting of such rarities, and such a

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<sup>107</sup> Cf. Bacon's distinction between knowledge of divine things and the knowledge produced by "the contemplation of God's creatures and works," which, "having regard to God," can give "no perfect knowledge, but wonder, which is broken knowledge." (*Advancement of Learning*, edited by R. F. Jones, 1937, p. 178.) Milton is least like Bacon in his confidence of his knowledge of God.

<sup>108</sup> The parable of the talents entrusted to good and negligent servants (Matt. xxv, 14-30) played a great part in Milton's inner life. Cf. Sonnet: *How soon hath Time*. . . .

<sup>109</sup> *orient*: supremely lustrous; applied to pearls because the best of them once came from the east. Milton thought of the parable (Matt. xiii, 45-6) of the "pearl of great price," to buy which a merchant "went and sold all that he had," and to which Christ compared the kingdom of heaven.

cheapness as would undo them, and turn their trash upon their hands. Therefore by gratifying the corrupt desires of men in fleshly doctrines, they stir them up to persecute with hatred and contempt all those that seek to bear themselves uprightly in this their spiritual factory:<sup>110</sup> which they foreseeing, though they cannot but testify of truth and the excellence of that heavenly traffic which they bring against what opposition or danger soever, yet needs must it sit heavily upon their spirits, that being, in God's prime intention and their own, selected heralds of peace and dispensers of treasure inestimable, without price, to them that have no pence, they find in the discharge of their commission that they are made the greatest variance and offense, a very sword and fire both in house and city over the whole earth. This is that which the sad prophet Jeremiah laments: "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me, a man of strife and contention!"<sup>111</sup> And although divine inspiration must certainly have been sweet to those ancient prophets, yet the irksomeness of that truth which they brought was so unpleasant to them that everywhere they call it a burden. Yea, that mysterious book of revelation<sup>112</sup> which the great evangelist was bid to eat, as it had been some eye-brightening electuary of knowledge and foresight, though it were sweet in his mouth and in the learning, it was bitter in his belly, bitter in the denouncing. Nor was this hid from the wise poet Sophocles,<sup>113</sup> who in that place of his tragedy where Tiresias is called to resolve king Œdipus in a matter which he knew would be grievous, brings him in be-

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<sup>110</sup> *factory*: trading post.

<sup>111</sup> Jeremiah xv, 10.

<sup>112</sup> In Revelation x, 9, the angel commands John to take the mysterious book that he carries and to "eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey." David Paræus (1548-1622), the great Heidelberg theologian, in his *Commentary on Revelation*, interpreted this verse as teaching "the ministers of the word . . . earnestly to devour or eat up the doctrine of salvation divinely written and received from Christ, that is, diligently to read, understand, and meditate, & as it were to turne it into their verie moisture and blood."

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, 316-8. Tiresias unwillingly exposes Oedipus as the slayer of his father and husband of his mother.

moaning his lot, that he knew more than other men. For surely to every good and peaceable man it must in nature needs be a hateful thing to be the displeaser and molester of thousands; much better would it like him doubtless to be the messenger of gladness and contentment, which is his chief intended business to all mankind, but that they resist and oppose their own true happiness. But when God commands to take the trumpet and blow a dolorous or a jarring blast, it lies not in man's will what he shall say or what he shall conceal. If he shall think to be silent, as Jeremiah<sup>114</sup> did because of the reproach and derision he met with daily, "And all his familiar friends watched for his halting," to be revenged on him for speaking the truth, he would be forced to confess as he confessed: "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary with forbearing and could not stay." Which might teach these times not suddenly to condemn all things that are sharply spoken or vehemently written as proceeding out of stomach, virulence, and ill-nature; but to consider rather that if the prelates have leave to say the worst that can be said and do the worst that can be done, while they strive to keep to themselves, to their great pleasure and commodity, those things which they ought to render up, no man can be justly offended with him that shall endeavour to impart and bestow, without any gain to himself, those sharp but saving words which would be a terror and a torment in him to keep back. For me, I have determined to lay up as the best treasure and solace of a good old age, if God vouchsafe it me, the honest liberty of free speech from my youth, where I shall think it available in so dear a concernment as the church's good. For if I be, either by disposition or what other cause, too inquisitive or suspicious of myself and mine own doings, who can help it? But this I foresee, that should the church be brought under heavy oppression, and God have

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<sup>114</sup> In Jeremiah xx, 9-10, the prophet recalls that many of his acquaintances had doubted his perseverance in delivering his message, and that they had been convinced that God's word was in his heart like a fire in his bones.

given me ability the while to reason against that man that should be the author of so foul a deed, or should she, by blessing from above on the industry and courage of faithful men, change this her distracted estate into better days without the least furtherance or contribution of those few talents which God at that present had lent me, I foresee what stories I should hear within myself, all my life after, of discourage and reproach. "Timorous and ingrateful, the church of God is now again at the foot of her insulting enemies, and thou bewailest. What matters it for thee, or thy bewailing? When time was, thou couldst not find a syllable of all that thou hadst read or studied, to utter in her behalf. Yet ease and leisure was given thee for thy retired thoughts, out of the sweat of other men. Thou hadst the diligence, the parts, the language of a man, if a vain subject were to be adorned or beautified, but when the cause of God and his church was to be pleaded, for which purpose that tongue was given thee which thou hast, God listened if he could hear thy voice among his zealous servants, but thou wert dumb as a beast; from henceforward be that which thine own brutish silence hath made thee." Or else I should have heard on the other ear: "Slothful, and ever to be set light by, the church hath now overcome her late distresses after the unwearied labors of many her true servants that stood up in her defence; thou also wouldst take upon thee to share amongst them of their joy: but wherefore thou? Where canst thou show any word or deed of thine which might have hastened her peace? Whatever thou dost now talk or write, or look, is the alms of other men's active prudence and zeal. Dare not now to say or do anything better than thy former sloth and infancy,<sup>115</sup> or if thou darest, thou dost impudently to make a thrifty purchase of boldness to thyself out of the painful merits of other men; what before was thy sin is now thy duty, to be abject and worthless." These and suchlike lessons as these, I know would have been my matins duly and my even-song. But now by this little diligence, mark what a privilege I have

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<sup>115</sup> *infancy*: speechlessness, the supposed primitive Latin meaning of the word, was probably in Milton's mind.



gained; with good men and saints to claim my right of lamenting the tribulations of the church, if she should suffer, when others that have ventured nothing for her sake, have not the honor to be admitted mourners. But if she lift up her drooping head and prosper, among those that have something more than wished her welfare, I have my charter and freehold of rejoicing to me and my heirs. Concerning therefore this wayward subject against prelaty, the touching whereof is so distasteful and disquietous to a number of men, as by what hath been said I may deserve of charitable readers to be credited, that neither envy nor gall hath entered me upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only and a preventive fear lest the omitting of this duty should be against me, when I would store up to myself the good provision of peaceful hours; so lest it should be still imputed to me, as I have found it hath been, that some self-pleasing humor of vain-glory hath incited me to contest with men of high estimation, now while green years are upon my head; from this needless surmisal I shall hope to dissuade the intelligent and equal<sup>116</sup> auditor, if I can but say successfully that which in this exigent behoves me; although I would be heard only, if it might be, by the elegant and learned reader, to whom principally for a while I shall beg leave I may address myself. To him it will be no new thing though I tell him that if I hunted after praise by the ostentation of wit and learning, I should not write thus out of mine own season when I have neither yet completed to my mind the full circle of my private studies,<sup>117</sup> although I complain not of any insufficiency to the matter in hand; or were I ready to my wishes, it were a folly to commit anything elaborately composed to the careless and interrupted listening of these tumultuous times. Next, if I were wise only to mine own ends, I would certainly take such a subject as of itself might catch applause, whereas this hath all the disadvantages on the contrary, and such a subject as the publishing whereof might be delayed at pleasure, and time enough to pencil it over with all the curious

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<sup>116</sup> *equal*: impartial.

<sup>117</sup> *my private studies*: cf. Introduction #15.

touches of art, even to the perfection of a faultless picture; whenas in this argument the not deferring is of great moment to the good speeding, that if solidity have leisure to do her office, art cannot have much. Lastly, I should not choose this manner of writing, wherein knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand. And though I shall be foolish in saying more to this purpose, yet, since it will be such a folly as wisest men going about to commit have only confessed and so committed, I may trust with more reason, because with more folly, to have courteous pardon. For although a poet, soaring in the high region of his fancies with his garland and singing robes about him, might without apology speak more of himself than I mean to do, yet for me sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing among many readers of no empyreal conceit,<sup>118</sup> to venture and divulge unusual things of myself, I shall petition to the gentler sort, it may not be envy to me. I must say, therefore, that after I had from my first years by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father<sup>119</sup> (whom God recompense) been exercised to the tongues and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers both at home and at the schools, it was found that whether aught was imposed me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of mine own choice in English or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly this latter, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live. But much latelier in the private academies of Italy, whither I was favored to resort—perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory, composed at under twenty or thereabout (for the manner is that every one must give some proof of his wit and reading there) met with acceptance above what was looked for, and other things which I had shifted in scarcity of books and con-

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<sup>118</sup> *empyreal conceit*: heavenly imagination. Cf. Milton's profession to have "drawn Empyreal Air" in *P.L.* VII, 14, when he has his singing robes on and is talking of himself.

<sup>119</sup> *my father*: cf. *To his Father*, ll. 77-92.

veniences to patch up amongst them, were received with written encomiums,<sup>120</sup> which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps—I began thus far to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labor and intent study (which I take to be my portion in this life) joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die. These thoughts at once possessed me, and these other; that if I were certain to write as men buy leases,<sup>121</sup> for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had than to God's glory, by the honor and instruction of my country. For which cause, and not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latins, I applied myself to that resolution which Ariosto<sup>122</sup> followed against the persuasions of Bembo, to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue; not to make verbal curiosities the end, that were a toilsome vanity, but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother dialect. That what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above of being a Christian, might do for mine; not caring to be once named abroad, though perhaps I could attain to that, but content with these British islands as my world; whose fortune hath hitherto been that if the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers,

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<sup>120</sup> *written encomiums*: cf. *Paradise Regained*, *The Minor Poems*, and *Samson Agonistes*, pp. 4-13.

<sup>121</sup> *leases*: English leases were often for ninety-nine years.

<sup>122</sup> Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533) was well known for his saying to Cardinal Bembo that he would "rather be one of the first Italian authors than barely a second among the Latins." The story is told in Giovambattista Pigna's short life of the poet, which was prefixed to most of the later editions of the *Orlando Furioso* (e. g., that of Venice, 1566). Pigna represents him as developing skill in Latin lyric verse in youth and later turning to his native language for motives like those which led Milton to a similar decision.

England hath had her noble achievements made small by the unskilful handling of monks and mechanics.<sup>123</sup>

Time serves not now, and perhaps I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home in the spacious circuits of her musing hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting; whether that epic form whereof the two poems of Homer and those other two of Virgil and Tasso<sup>124</sup> are a diffuse, and the book of Job<sup>125</sup> a brief, model: or whether the rules of Aristotle<sup>126</sup> herein are strictly to be kept, or nature to be followed, which in them that know art and use judgment, is no transgression but an enriching of art: and lastly, what king or knight before the conquest might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of a Christian hero.<sup>127</sup> And as Tasso<sup>128</sup> gave to a prince of Italy his choice whether he would command him to write of Godfrey's expedition against the Infidels, or Belisarius against the

<sup>123</sup> *monks and mechanics*: the monastic chroniclers of the Middle Ages, whose mechanically compiled records Milton may already have been examining critically for his projected *History of Britain*.

<sup>124</sup> Contemporary criticism laid great stress on the continuity of the epic tradition from Homer's *Iliad* through Virgil's *Aeneid* to the *Jerusalem Delivered* of Torquato Tasso (1544-95).

<sup>125</sup> This mention of the Book of Job as a short epic does not mean that Milton failed to recognize the dramatic elements which Martin Luther attributed to it in his *Table Talk* (*Tischreden* IV, 405-6).

<sup>126</sup> Critical discussion of the *Orlando Furioso* and of the much more regular *Jerusalem Delivered* had gone to extremes in Italy in praising and condemning them for both observing and disregarding the rules of art (as found in Aristotle's *Poetics* and Horace's *Art of Poetry* and their Renaissance interpreters).

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Milton's confession of his hope of writing a Christian epic on King Arthur in *Manso*, 80-4, and of his abandonment of such epic themes in *P. L.* IX, 25-41. Cf. also P. F. Jones, "Milton and the Epic Subject from British History," *P.M.L.A.* XLII (1927), pp. 901-9, and M. M. Ross, *Milton's Royalism*, pp. 54-6, for a survey of the political motives which led Milton to prefer a Saxon hero like Alfred at this time to Arthur.

<sup>128</sup> When Tasso planned the *Jerusalem Delivered*, he was a pensioner of the Cardinal Luigi d'Este at the court of his brother, Alfonso II, Duke of Ferrara. Beside Godfrey of Boulogne's conquest of the Holy Land in the First Crusade, Tasso thought of two episodes in Italian history as possible subjects: the reconquest of the peninsula from the Ostrogoths in 538-40 by Belisarius, the great general of the Eastern Emperor Justinian, and Charlemagne's victory over the Lombards in northern Italy in 774.

Goths, or Charlemain against the Lombards; if to the instinct of nature and the emboldening of art aught may be trusted, and that there be nothing adverse in our climate<sup>129</sup> or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in our own ancient stories: or whether those dramatic constitutions, wherein Sophocles<sup>130</sup> and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation. The scripture also affords us a divine pastoral drama in the Song of Solomon,<sup>131</sup> consisting of two persons and a double chorus, as Origen rightly judges. And the Apocalypse of St. John is the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy,<sup>132</sup> shutting up and intermingling her

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<sup>129</sup> Milton's interest in the originally Aristotelian idea that the climate of northern Europe was unfavorable to the development of the highest intelligence may have been sharpened by its prominence in Jean Bodin's *Six Books of the Republic*, which he quotes in Chapter 3 below. Cf. *To Manso*, 28, and *P. L.* IX, 44-5, notes.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Milton's justification of a tragedy on the Greek model in his preface to *S. A.*

<sup>131</sup> This reference to the Song of Solomon is explained by the following passage from Paraeus' *Commentary on the Revelation*, which comes on p. 20 in Arnold's translation (1644), immediately before the remarks about the Apocalypse to which Milton next refers: "What Origen therefore wrote (in Prologo Cant. & Homil. I) touching the *Song of Songs*: *that it seemed to him Solomon wrote a wedding song after the manner of a Drama: which, saith he, is a song of many Personages: . . . and he calleth that wedding Verse a Spirituall Interlude of foure Personages, which he saith the Lord revealed unto him in the same; viz. the Bridegroom and Bride: with the Bride her Virgins: with the Bridegroom his flock of Companions*: The same thing I more truly may say touching the Revelation, that it seemes unto mee, the Lord Iesus revealed the same unto Iohn by his Angell, after the manner of a *Drammaticall Representation*."

<sup>132</sup> Paraeus then goes on to call Revelation "a *Prophetical Drama*, show, or representation. For as in human Tragedies, diverse persons one after another come upon the Theater to represent things done, and so again depart: diverse Chores also or Companies of Musicians and Harpers distinguish the diversity of the *Acts*, and while the *Actors* hold up, do with musically accord sweeten the weariness of the Spectators, and keepe them in attention: so verily the thing it selfe speaketh that in this Heavenly Interlude, by diverse *shewes* and *apparitions* are represented diverse, or rather . . . the same things touching the Church, not past, but to come, and that their diverse *Acts* are renewed by diverse *Chores* or Companies, one while of 24 *Elders* and *four Beasts*, another while of *Angels*, sometimes of *Sealed ones in their foreheads*, and sometimes of *Harpers, &c.*

solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies: and this my opinion the grave authority of Pareus, commenting that book, is sufficient to confirm. Or if occasion shall lead to imitate those magnificent odes and hymns wherein Pindarus and Callimachus<sup>133</sup> are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter most an end faulty. But those frequent songs<sup>134</sup> throughout the law and prophets beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable. These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God rarely bestowed, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every nation; and are of power beside the office of a pulpit, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind and set the affections in right tune, to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church, to sing the victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ, to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship. Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or

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with *new Songs*, and worthy *Hymmes*, not so much to lessen the wearisomenesse of the Spectators, as to infuse holy meditations into the mindes of the Readers, and to lift them up to Heavenly matters."

<sup>133</sup> Milton thought of the great *Odes* of Pindar (552?-472? B.C.) and of the *Hymns* of the Alexandrian poet Callimachus (310?-235 B.C.), of both of whom there are several reminiscences in his minor poems.

<sup>134</sup> In this superlative estimate of the Psalms Milton echoed the opinion of such a Protestant humanist as Sidney (in *An Apology for Poetry*). Even Peacham in his *Compleat Gentleman* (1634), pp. 79-80, asks, "What are the Psalmes of *David* . . . but a Divine Poeme, going sometime in one measure and sometime in another? What lively descriptions are there of the Majesty of God, the estate and security of Gods children, the miserable condition of the wicked? What lively similitudes and comparisons, as the righteous man to a bay tree, the Soule to a thirsty Hart, vnity to oyntment and the dew of Hermon? What excellent Allegories, as the vine planted in *Ægypt*?"

grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and refluxes of man's thoughts from within, all these things with a solid and treatable smoothness to paint out and describe. Teaching<sup>135</sup> over the whole book of sanctity and virtue through all the instances of example, with such delight to those especially of soft and delicious temper who will not so much as look upon truth herself, unless they see her elegantly dressed, that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant, they would then appear to all men both easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed. And what a benefit this would be to our youth and gentry may be soon guessed by what we know of the corruption and bane which they suck in daily from the writings and interludes of libidinous and ignorant poetasters, who, having scarce ever heard of that which is the main consistence of a true poem, the choice of such persons as they ought to introduce, and what is moral and decent to each one, do for the most part lap up vicious principles in sweet pills to be swallowed down, and make the taste of virtuous documents harsh and sour. But because the spirit of man cannot demean itself lively in this body without some recreating intermission of labor and serious things, it were happy for the commonwealth if our magistrates, as in those famous governments of old, would take into their care, not only the deciding of our contentious law-cases and brawls, but the managing of our public sports and festival pastimes,<sup>136</sup> that they might be, not such as were

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<sup>135</sup> This is the most ardent statement in English of the Renaissance conception of the didactic value of poetry, which is defended in Sidney's *Apology*. Cf. Spenser's letter to Raleigh, prefixed to *The Faerie Queene*, explaining his intention to follow Homer and all the world's great epic poets who, in their heroes, have "ensampled a good governour and a vertuous man."

<sup>136</sup> Here again Milton has Plato's *Laws* in mind (cf. notes 1, 14, and 22 above) and their elaborate prescriptions about public festivals and education in traditional songs and dances in the seventh book. In contrast, he recalls the traditional encouragement of such recreation as "dancing, either men or women, . . . archery for men, leaping, running, vaulting,

authorized a while since, the provocations of drunkenness and lust, but such as may inure and harden our bodies by martial exercises to all warlike skill and performance, and may civilize, adorn, and make discreet our minds by the learned and affable meeting of frequent academies, and the procurement of wise and artful recitations sweetened with eloquent and graceful enticements to the love and practice of justice, temperance, and fortitude, instructing and bettering the nation at all opportunities, that the call of wisdom and virtue may be heard everywhere, as Solomon saith: "She crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, in the top of high places, in the chief concourse, and in the openings of the gates."<sup>137</sup> Whether this may not be, not only in pulpits, but after another persuasive method, at set and solemn panegyries,<sup>138</sup> in theatres, porches,<sup>139</sup> or what other place or way may win most upon the people to receive at once both recreation and instruction, let them in authority consult. The thing which I had to say, and those intentions which have lived within me ever since I could conceive myself anything worth to my country, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath plucked from me by an abortive and foredated discovery. And the accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above man's to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself as far as life and free leisure will extend; and that the land had once enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of prelaty, under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical duncery no free and splendid wit can flourish. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the

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. . . May-games, Whitsun-ales, and Morrice-dances" by James I's Declaration of Sports (1618) and by Cavalier practice generally.

<sup>137</sup> Proverbs viii, 2-3.

<sup>138</sup> *panegyries*: religious festivals.

<sup>139</sup> *porches*: porticos or porches giving entrance to churches or public buildings. Sermons were often preached in such places to crowds in the streets.



heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases:<sup>140</sup> to this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs, till which in some measure be compassed, at mine own peril and cost I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them. Although it nothing content me to have disclosed thus much beforehand, but that I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies to come into the dim reflection of hollow antiquities sold by the seeming bulk, and there be fain to club quotations with men whose learning and belief lies in marginal stuffings, who, when they have like good sumpters<sup>141</sup> laid ye down their horse-load of citations and fathers at your door, with a rhapsody of who and who were bishops here or there, ye may take off their packsaddles, their day's work is done, and episcopacy, as they think, stoutly vindicated. Let any gentle apprehension that can distinguish learned pains from unlearned drudgery imagine what pleasure or profoundness can be in this, or what honor to deal against such adversaries. But were it the meanest under-service, if God by his secre-

<sup>140</sup> The allusion is to the vision of "the Lord sitting upon a throne. . . . Above it stood the seraphim" in Isaiah vi, 1-2, but the conception of the nature of poetry recalls *P.L.* I, 6-23, and IX, 20-24, and *To his Father*, ll. 67-76. Cf. also Milton's development of the theme of the poet as a man whose life is a perfect poem in *Elegy VI*, 67-78.

<sup>141</sup> *sumpters*: pack animals.

tary conscience enjoin it, it were sad for me if I should draw back, for me especially, now when all men offer their aid to help ease and enlighten the difficult labors of the church, to whose service by the intentions of my parents and friends I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions: till coming to some maturity of years and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing. Howsoever, thus church-outed<sup>142</sup> by the prelates, hence may appear the right I have to meddle in these matters, as before the necessity and constraint appeared.

## CHAPTER I.

*That Prelaty opposeth the reason and end of the Gospel three ways, and first, in her outward form.*

AFTER this digression it would remain that I should single out some other reason which might undertake for prelacy to be a fit and lawful church-government; but finding none of like validity with these that have already sped according to their fortune, I shall add one reason why it is not to be thought a church-government at all, but a church tyranny, and is at hostile terms with the end and reason of Christ's evangelic ministry. Albeit I must confess to be half in doubt whether I should bring it forth or no, it being so contrary to the eye of the world, and the world so potent in most men's hearts, that I shall endanger either not to be regarded or not to be understood. For who is there almost that measures wisdom by simplicity, strength by suffering, dignity by lowliness? Who is

<sup>142</sup>For a discussion of the justice of Milton's claim to have been "church-outed by the prelates," cf. William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, Chap. viii.

there that counts it first to be last, something to be nothing, and reckons himself of great command in that he is a servant?<sup>143</sup> Yet God, when he meant to subdue the world and hell at once, part of that to salvation, and this wholly to perdition, made choice of no other weapons or auxiliaries than these, whether to save or to destroy. It had been a small mastery for him to have drawn out his legions into array and flanked them with his thunder; therefore he sent foolishness to confute wisdom, weakness to bind strength, despisedness to vanquish pride. And this is the great mystery of the gospel made good in Christ himself, who, as he testifies, came not to be ministered to, but to minister;<sup>144</sup> and must be fulfilled in all his ministers till his second coming. To go against these principles St. Paul so feared that if he should but affect the wisdom of words in his preaching, he thought it would be laid to his charge that he had made the cross of Christ to be of none effect.<sup>145</sup> Whether, then, prelaty do not make of none effect the cross of Christ by the principles it hath so contrary to these, nullifying the power and end of the gospel, it shall not want due proof, if it want not due belief. Neither shall I stand to trifle with one that will tell me of quiddities<sup>146</sup> and formalities, whether prelaty or prelateity in abstract notion be this or that; it suffices me that I find it in his skin, so I find it inseparable, or not oftener otherwise than a phoenix<sup>147</sup> hath been seen; although I persuade me that whatever faultiness was but superficial to prelaty at the beginning, is now by the just judgment of God long since branded and inworn into the

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<sup>143</sup> Milton is building on Christ's words to the apostles: "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and a servant of all" (Mark ix, 35). This verse figured constantly in anti-episcopal writing. Cf. Introduction #21.

<sup>144</sup> The sentence is woven out of reminiscences of I Corinthians i, *passim*; II Corinthians xii, 9; Matthew xx, 28; and Mark x, 45.

<sup>145</sup> I Corinthians i, 17.

<sup>146</sup> *quiddities*: abstract essences, philosophically defined. *Prelateity*—"the essential quality or essence of a prelate" (*N. E. D.*) is an example.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Milton's use of the phoenix, the "self-begotten bird" which lives, alone of its kind, for a millenium, in *Samson Agonistes*, 1699, and the note there.

very essence thereof. First, therefore, if to do the work of the gospel Christ our Lord took upon him the form of a servant,<sup>148</sup> how can his servant in this ministry take upon him the form of a lord? I know Bilson<sup>149</sup> hath deciphered us all the gallantries of *signore* and *monsignore* and *monsieur* as circumstantially as any punctualist of Castile, Naples, or Fountain Bleau could have done: but this must not so compliment us out of our right minds as to be to learn that the form of a servant was a mean, laborious, and vulgar life, aptest to teach; which form Christ thought fittest that he might bring about his will according to his own principles, choosing the meaner things of this world that he might put under the high. Now, whether the pompous garb, the lordly life, the wealth, the haughty distance of prelaty, be those meaner things of the world, whereby God in them would manage the mystery of his gospel, be it the verdict of common sense. For Christ saith, in St. John,<sup>150</sup> "The servant is not greater than his lord, nor he that is sent greater than he that sent him;" and adds, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."<sup>151</sup> Then let the prelates well advise, if they neither know nor do these things, or if they know and yet do them not, wherein their happiness consists. And thus is the gospel frustrated by the lordly form of prelaty.

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<sup>148</sup> Philippians ii, 7.

<sup>149</sup> For Thomas Bilson (1547-1616), Bishop of Winchester from 1597 until his death, cf. Introduction #26. The revival of interest in his *True Difference between Christian Subjection and Unchristian Rebellion* is said to have contributed to the decision to put Charles I to death. In resenting his defense of ecclesiastical titles as smacking more of the places of their origin—the Spanish, Italian and French courts at Castile, Naples, and Fontainebleau—Milton took a time-honored Puritan position to which Bilson had already replied in *The Perpetual Government of Christes Church*, chapter vi; "What Dominion and Titles Christ interdicted his Apostles." He argued that, though Christ forbade the Apostles lordship over one another, as slaves, he permitted it among them as brothers; and that, although he forbade the abuse of the title Rabbi, he permitted all innocent use of titles of respect, such as the Puritans themselves gave to their ministers.

<sup>150</sup> John xiii, 16, and xv, 20.

<sup>151</sup> John xviii, 17.

## CHAPTER II.

*That the ceremonious doctrine of Prelaty opposeth the reason and end of the Gospel.*

THAT which next declares the heavenly power and reveals the deep mystery of the gospel is the pure simplicity of doctrine, accounted the foolishness of this world, yet crossing and confounding the pride and wisdom of the flesh. And wherein consists this fleshly wisdom and pride? In being altogether ignorant of God and his worship? No, surely; for men are naturally ashamed of that. Where then? It consists in a bold presumption of ordering the worship and service of God after man's own will in traditions and ceremonies. Now if the pride and wisdom of the flesh were to be defeated and confounded, no doubt but in that very point wherein it was proudest and thought itself wisest, that so the victory of the gospel might be the more illustrious. But our prelates, instead of expressing the spiritual power of their ministry by warring against this chief bulwark and stronghold of the flesh, have entered into fast league with the principal enemy against whom they were sent, and turned the strength of fleshly pride and wisdom against the pure simplicity of saving truth. First, mistrusting to find the authority of their order in the immediate institution of Christ or his apostles by the clear evidence of scripture, they fly to the carnal supportment of tradition; when we appeal to the Bible, they to the unweildy volumes of tradition: and do not shame to reject the ordinance of him that is eternal for the perverse iniquity of sixteen hundred years; choosing rather to think truth itself a liar, than that sixteen ages should be taxed with an error; not considering the general apostacy that was foretold and the church's flight into the wilderness.<sup>152</sup> Nor is this enough; instead of showing

<sup>152</sup> In his *Commentary upon the Revelation* (p. 274) Paraeus had no hesitation in interpreting the prophecy in the twelfth chapter of the "woman clothed with the Sun" as representing the early Church. By her investment with wings in verse fourteen he said that the flight of true Christians into obscure retreats during the Dark and Middle Ages was meant. Cf. Introduction #22.

the reason of their lowly condition from divine example and command, they seek to prove their high pre-eminence from human consent and authority. But let them chant while they will of prerogatives, we shall tell them of scripture; of custom, we of scripture; of acts and statutes, still of scripture; till the quick and piercing word enter to the dividing of their souls,<sup>153</sup> and the mighty weakness of the gospel throw down the weak mightiness of man's reasoning. Now for their demeanor within the church, how have they disfigured and defaced that more than angelic brightness, the unclouded serenity of Christian religion, with the dark overcasting of superstitious copes and flaminical<sup>154</sup> vestures, wearing on their backs and, I abhor to think, perhaps in some worse place, the unexpressible image of God the Father! Tell me, ye priests, wherefore this gold, wherefore these robes and surplices over the gospel? Is our religion guilty of the first trespass and hath need of clothing to cover her nakedness? What does this else but cast an ignominy upon the perfection of Christ's ministry by seeking to adorn it with that which was the poor remedy of our shame? Believe it, wondrous doctors, all corporeal resemblances of inward holiness and beauty are now past; he that will clothe the gospel now, intimates plainly that the gospel is naked, uncomely, that I may not say reproachful. Do not, ye church maskers, while Christ is clothing upon our bareness with his righteous garment to make us acceptable in his Father's sight, do not, as ye do, cover and hide his righteous verity with the polluted clothing of your ceremonies to make it seem more decent in your own eyes. "How beautiful," saith Isaiah, "are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation!"<sup>155</sup> Are the feet so beautiful, and is the very bringing of these tidings so decent of itself? What new decency

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<sup>153</sup> "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." Heb. iv, 12.

<sup>154</sup> The flamens were priests in ancient Roman paganism. Cf. *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, 194, and *Areopagitica*, note 47.

<sup>155</sup> Isaiah lii, 7.

then can be added to this by your spinstry?<sup>156</sup> Ye think by these gaudy glisterings to stir up the devotion of the rude multitude; ye think so, because ye forsake the heavenly teaching of St. Paul for the hellish sophistry of papism. If the multitude be rude, the lips of the preacher must give knowledge, and not ceremonies. And although some Christians be new-born babes<sup>157</sup> comparatively to some that are stronger, yet in respect of ceremony, which is but a rudiment of the law, the weakest Christian hath thrown off the robes of his minority and is a perfect man, as to legal rites. What children's food there is in the gospel we know to be no other than the "sincerity of the word, that they may grow thereby."<sup>158</sup> But is here the utmost of your outbraving the service of God? No. Ye have been bold not to set your threshold by his threshold<sup>159</sup> or your posts by his posts, but your sacrament, your sign, call it what you will, by his sacrament, baptizing the Christian infant with a solemn sprinkle, and unbaptizing for your own part with a profane and impious forefinger; as if, when ye had laid the purifying element upon his forehead, ye meant to cancel and cross it out again with a character not of God's bidding. O but the innocence of these ceremonies! O rather the sottish absurdity of this excuse! What could be more innocent than the washing of a cup,<sup>160</sup> a glass, or hands before meat, and that under the law when so many washings were commanded, and by long tradition? Yet our Saviour detested their customs though never so seeming harm-

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<sup>156</sup> *spinstry*: drapery, millinery.

<sup>157</sup> Milton adapts Paul's argument (Rom. ii, 20; I Cor. iii, 1-3; and Ephes. iv, 13-14) that Christians who had emerged from Judaism and had not abandoned their "bondage to the law" (*i. e.* the ceremonial law of Moses) were "babes" in the faith.

<sup>158</sup> "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (I Pet. ii, 2.)

<sup>159</sup> Speaking of the disrespect which the Israelites had shown to the Temple the prophet said (Ezek. xlv, 8): "In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, . . . they have even defiled my holy name."

<sup>160</sup> Christ condemned the ceremonial importance attached by the Pharisees to washing "the cup and the platter" (Matt. xxiii, 25) and to washing hands before eating (Mark vii, 4).

less, and charges them severely that they had transgressed the commandments of God by their traditions and worshipped him in vain. How much more then must these and much grosser ceremonies now in force, delude the end of Christ's coming in the flesh against the flesh, and stifle the sincerity of our new covenant which hath bound us to forsake all carnal pride and wisdom, especially in matters of religion. Thus we see again how prelaty, sailing in opposition to the main end and power of the gospel, doth not join in that mysterious work of Christ, by lowliness to confound height; by simplicity of doctrine the wisdom of the world; but contrariwise hath made itself high in the world and the flesh to vanquish things by the world accounted low, and made itself wise in tradition and fleshly ceremony to confound the purity of doctrine which is the wisdom of God.

### CHAPTER III.

*That Prelatical jurisdiction opposeth the reason and end of the Gospel and of State.*

THE THIRD and last consideration remains, whether the prelates in their function do work according to the gospel, practising to subdue the mighty things of this world by things weak, which St. Paul<sup>161</sup> hath set forth to be the power and excellence of the gospel, or whether in more likelihood they band themselves with the prevalent things of this world, to overrun the weak things which Christ hath made choice to work by: and this will soonest be discerned by the course of their jurisdiction. But here again I find my thoughts almost in suspense betwixt yea and no, and am nigh turning mine eye which way I may best retire and not proceed in this subject, blaming the ardency of my mind that fixed me too attentively to come thus far. For truth, I know not how, hath this unhappiness fatal to her, ere she can come to the trial and

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<sup>161</sup> Milton paraphrases Paul's words in I Corinthians i, 26-27.



inspection of the understanding; being to pass through many little wards and limits of the several affections and desires, she cannot shift it, but must put on such colors<sup>162</sup> and attire as those pathetic handmaids of the soul please to lead her in to their queen. And if she find so much favor with them, they let her pass in her own likeness; if not, they bring her into the presence habited and colored like a notorious falsehood. And contrary, when any falsehood comes that way, if they like the errand she brings, they are so artful to counterfeit the very shape and visage of truth that the understanding not being able to discern the fucus which these enchantresses with such cunning have laid upon the feature sometimes of truth, sometimes of falsehood interchangeably, sentences for the most part one for the other at the first blush, according to the subtle imposture of these sensual mistresses that keep the ports and passages between her and the object. So that were it not for leaving imperfect that which is already said, I should go near to relinquish that which is to follow. And because I see that most men—as it happens in this world, either weakly or falsely principled, what through ignorance and what through custom of license, both in discourse and writing, by what hath been of late written in vulgar—have not seemed to attain the decision of this point, I shall likewise assay those wily arbitresses who in most men have, as was heard, the sole ushering of truth and falsehood between the sense and the soul, with what loyalty they will use me in convoying this truth to my understanding; the rather for that, by as much acquaintance as I can obtain with them, I do not find them engaged either one way or other. Concerning therefore ecclesial jurisdiction I find still more controversy, who should administer it, than diligent inquiry made to learn what it is; for had the pains been taken to search

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<sup>162</sup> This figure, which owed its popularity in part to Bacon's use of it in his essay "Of Truth," was frequent in Puritan controversy. On the first page of his *A Counter-Snarle for Ishmael Rabshacheh* (1613), Sir Edward Hoby said: "You are not to learne what *Artificiall* shadowes *Heresie* hath in all ages contriued, for the couering of her vgly shape; neither are you vnable to discern the counterfeit colours wherewith she hath varnished her wrinkled deformities."

out that, it had been long ago enrolled to be nothing else but a pure tyrannical forgery of the prelates; and that jurisdictional power in the church there ought to be none at all. It cannot be conceived that what men now call jurisdiction in the church, should be other thing than a Christian censorship; and therefore is it most commonly and truly named ecclesiastical censure. Now if the Roman censor,<sup>163</sup> a civil function, to that severe assize<sup>164</sup> of surveying and controlling the privatest and slyest manners of all men and all degrees had no jurisdiction, no courts of plea or indictment, no punitive force annexed—whether it were that to this manner of correction the entanglement of suits was improper, or that the notice of those upright inquisitors extended to such the most covert and spirituous vices as would slip easily between the wider and more material grasp of law, or that it stood more with the majesty of that office to have no other sergeants or maces about them but those invisible ones of terror and shame, or lastly, were it their fear lest the greatness of this authority and honor, armed with jurisdiction, might step with ease into a tyranny—in all these respects, with much more reason undoubtedly ought the censure of the church be quite divested and disentailed of all jurisdiction whatsoever. For if the course of judicature to a political censorship seem either too tedious or too contentious, much more may it to the discipline of church, whose definitive decrees are to be speedy, but the execution of rigor slow, contrary to what in legal proceedings is most usual, and by how much the less contentious it is, by so much will it be the more Christian. And if the Censor, in his moral episcopacy<sup>165</sup> being to judge most in matters not answerable by writ or action, could not use an instrument so gross and bodily as jurisdiction is,

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<sup>163</sup> The Roman Censorship consisted in the scrutiny of public morals by two highly respected officials who were elected for a five-year term and had unlimited *moral* power in the exercise of their office. The institution lasted from 443 to 22 B.C., and its discontinuance was commonly regarded in Milton's time as a result of the decay of republican institutions in Rome. Cf. note 170 below.

<sup>164</sup> *assize*: court session.

<sup>165</sup> *episcopacy*: inspection.

how can the minister of gospel manage the corpulent and secular trial of bill and process in things merely spiritual? Or could that Roman office, without this juridical sword or saw, strike such a reverence of itself into the most undaunted hearts as with one single dash of ignominy to put all the senate and knighthood of Rome into a tremble, surely much rather might the heavenly ministry of the evangel bind herself about with far more piercing beams of majesty and awe, by wanting the beggarly help of halings and amercements<sup>166</sup> in the use of her powerful keys. For when the church without temporal support is able to do her great works upon the unforced obedience of men, it argues a divinity about her. But when she thinks to credit and better her spiritual efficacy and to win herself respect and dread by strutting in the false vizard of worldly authority, 'tis evident that God is not there, but that her apostolic virtue is departed from her and hath left her key-cold; which she perceiving as in a decayed nature seeks to the outward fomentations and chafings of worldly help and external flourishes to fetch, if it be possible, some motion into her extreme parts, or to hatch a counterfeit life with the crafty and artificial heat of jurisdiction. But it is observable that so long as the church, in true imitation of Christ, can be content to ride upon an ass,<sup>167</sup> carrying herself and her government along in a mean and simple guise, she may be, as he is, a lion of the tribe of Judah, and in her humility all men with loud hosannas will confess her greatness. But when, despising the mighty operation of the Spirit by the weak things of this world, she thinks to make herself bigger and more considerable by using the way of civil force and jurisdiction, as she sits upon this lion she changes into an ass, and instead of hosannas every man pelts her with stones and dirt. Lastly, if the wisdom of the Romans feared to commit jurisdiction to an office of so high

<sup>166</sup> *halings and amercements*: violently executed summonses to the ecclesiastical courts and penalties, usually fines, fixed at their discretion.

<sup>167</sup> Milton interprets the story of Christ's entry into Jerusalem riding on an ass (Luke xix, 35-8) in the light of the salutation of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah by the elders in Revelation v, 5. In identifying the lion with Christ, he was following Paraeus (*Commentary*, p. 99).

esteem and dread as was the censor's, we may see what a solecism in the art of policy it hath been all this while through Christendom to give jurisdiction to ecclesiastical censure. For that strength, joined with religion abused and pretended to ambitious ends, must of necessity breed the heaviest and most quelling tyranny, not only upon the necks, but even to the souls of men: which if Christian Rome had been so cautelous<sup>168</sup> to prevent in her church as pagan Rome was in her state, we had not had such a lamentable experience thereof as now we have from thence upon all Christendom. For although I said before that the church coveting to ride upon the lionly form of jurisdiction makes a transformation of herself into an ass and becomes despicable, that is to those whom God hath enlightened with true knowledge; but where they remain yet in the reliques of superstition, this is the extremity of their bondage and blindness, that while they think they do obeisance to the lordly vision of a lion, they do it to an ass, that through the just judgment of God is permitted to play the dragon among them because of their wilful stupidity. And let England here well rub her eyes lest by leaving jurisdiction and church censure to the same persons, now that God hath been so long medicining her eyesight, she do not with her over-politic fetches<sup>169</sup> mar all, and bring herself back again to worship this ass bestriding a lion. Having hitherto explained that to ecclesiastical censure no jurisdictional power can be added without a childish and dangerous oversight in polity and a pernicious contradiction in evangelic discipline, as anon more fully, it will be next to declare wherein the true reason and force of church censure consists, which by then it shall be laid open to the root, so little is it that I fear lest any crookedness, any wrinkle or spot should be found in presbyterial government, that if Bodin,<sup>170</sup> the famous French writer, though a

<sup>168</sup> *cautelous*: wary, watchful.

<sup>169</sup> *over-politic fetches*: tricks or devices which are likely to fail or cause trouble because they are too artful.

<sup>170</sup> In the *Republic* (1576) VI, i, p. 854, the great French publicist, Jean Bodin (1530–1596), expressed admiration for the control of public morals exercised by the “bishops, ministers, and elders” of the Church at

papist, yet affirms that the commonwealth which maintains this discipline will certainly flourish in virtue and piety, I dare assure myself that every true protestant will admire the integrity, the uprightness, the divine and gracious purposes thereof, and even for the reason of it so coherent with the doctrine of the gospel, besides the evidence of command in Scripture, will confess it to be the only true church government, and that, contrary to the whole end and mystery of Christ's coming in the flesh, a false appearance of the same is exercised by prelaty. But because some count is rigorous, and that hereby men shall be liable to a double punishment, I will begin somewhat higher and speak of punishment, which, as it is an evil, I esteem to be of two sorts or rather two degrees only, a reprobate conscience in this life, and hell in the other world. Whatever else men call punishment or censure is not properly an evil, so it be not an illegal violence, but a saving medicine ordained of God both for the public and private good of man, who consisting of two parts, the inward and the outward, was by the eternal Providence left under two sorts of cure, the church and the magistrate. The magistrate hath only to deal with the outward part, I mean not of the body alone, but of the mind in all her outward acts, which in scripture is called the outward man. So that it would be helpful to us if we might borrow such authority as the rhetoricians by patent may give us, with a kind of Promethean skill to shape and fashion this outward man into the similitude of a body<sup>171</sup> and set him visible before us; imagining the inner man only as the soul. Thus then the civil magistrate looking only upon the outward man, (I say as a magistrate, for what he doth further, he doth

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Geneva without any use of force either by their own authority or that of the state. Incidentally, like Milton, Bodin compared the Presbyterian censorship of morals with that in ancient Rome, in both cases approving the avoidance of fines and other penalties for offenders and the appeal of the censors to public opinion to control them. Cf. note 129 above.

<sup>171</sup> Milton was perhaps thinking of Propertius' variation (in *Elegies* III, v, 7-10) of the myth of the making of men by Prometheus. In forming them out of the physical features of various animals and giving them the passions of various creatures, Propertius says that Prometheus forgot to give them minds.

it as a member of the church), if he find in his complexion, skin, or outward temperature the signs and marks, or in his doings the effects of injustice, rapine, lust, cruelty, or the like, sometimes he shuts up as in phrenetic<sup>172</sup> or infectious diseases, or confines within doors, as in every sickly estate. Sometimes he shaves by penalty or mulct,<sup>173</sup> or else to cool and take down those luxuriant humors which wealth and excess have caused to abound. Otherwhiles he sears, he cauterizes, he scarifies, lets blood, and finally, for utmost remedy cuts off. The patients which most an end are brought into his hospital, are such as are far gone and beside themselves (unless they be falsely accused) so that force is necessary to tame and quiet them in their unruly fits, before they can be made capable of a more human cure. His general end is the outward peace and welfare of the commonwealth, and civil happiness in this life. His particular end in every man is, by the infliction of pain, damage, and disgrace, that the senses and common perceivance might carry this message to the soul within, that it is neither easeful, profitable, nor praiseworthy in this life to do evil. Which must needs tend to the good of man, whether he be to live or die; and be undoubtedly the first means to a natural man, especially an offender, which might open his eyes to a higher consideration of good and evil, as it is taught in religion. This is seen in the often penitence of those that suffer, who, had they escaped, had gone on sinning to an immeasurable heap, which is one of the extremest punishments. And this is all that the civil magistrate, as so being, confers to the healing of man's mind, working only by terrifying plasters upon the rind and orifice of the sore, and by all outward appliances, as the logicians say, *a posteriori*, at the effect, and not from the cause; not once touching the inward bed of corruption and that hectic disposition to evil, the source of all vice and obliquity against the rule of law. Which how insufficient it is to cure the soul of man, we cannot better guess than by the art of bodily physic. Therefore God to the intent of further healing.

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<sup>172</sup> *phrenetic*: insantly excited.

<sup>173</sup> *mulct*: fine.

man's depraved mind, to this power of the magistrate, which contents itself with the restraint of evil-doing in the external man, added that which we call censure, to purge it and remove it clean out of the inmost soul. In the beginning this authority seems to have been placed, as all both civil and religious rites once were, only in each father of family,<sup>174</sup> afterwards, among the heathen, in the wise men and philosophers of the age; but so as it was a thing voluntary, and no set government. More distinctly among the Jews, as being God's peculiar, where the priests, Levites, prophets, and at last the scribes and pharisees took charge of instructing and overseeing the lives of the people. But in the gospel, which is the straitest and the dearest covenant can be made between God and man, we being now his adopted sons, and nothing fitter for us to think on than to be like him, united to him, and, as he pleases to express it, to have fellowship with him; it is all necessity that we should expect this blessed efficacy of healing our inward man to be ministered to us in a more familiar and effectual method than ever before. God being now no more a judge after the sentence of the law, nor, as it were, a schoolmaster of perishable rites, but a most indulgent father governing his church as a family of sons in their discreet age; and therefore, in the sweetest and mildest manner of paternal discipline, he hath committed this other office of preserving in healthful constitution the inner man, which may be termed the spirit of the soul, to his spiritual deputy the minister of each congregation; who being best acquainted with his own flock, hath best reason to know all the secretest diseases likely to be there. And look, by how much the internal man is more excellent and noble than the external, by so much is his cure more exactly, more thoroughly, and more particularly to be performed. For which cause the Holy Ghost by the apostles, joined to the minister,

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<sup>174</sup> Robert Filmer's *The Anarchy of Limited Monarchy* (1648, p. 6) says that in Adam's ordination "to rule over his Wife . . . we have the originall grant of Government, & the fountain of all power placed in the *father* of all mankind; accordingly we find the *law* for obedience to government given in the tearms of *honor thy Father*."

as assistant in this great office, sometimes a certain number of grave and faithful brethren<sup>175</sup> (for neither doth the physician do all in restoring his patient; he prescribes, another prepares the medicine; some tend, some watch, some visit) much more may a minister partly not see all, partly err as a man: besides that nothing can be more for the mutual honor and love of the people to their pastor, and his to them, than when in select numbers and courses they are seen partaking and doing reverence to the holy duties of discipline by their serviceable and solemn presence, and receiving honor again from their employment, not now any more to be separated in the church by veils and partitions as laics and unclean, but admitted to wait upon the tabernacle as the rightful clergy of Christ, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice in that meet place to which God and the congregation shall call and assign them. And this all Christians ought to know, that the title of clergy St. Peter gave to all God's people, till pope Higinus<sup>176</sup> and the succeeding prelates took it from them, appropriating that name to themselves and their priests only; and condemning the rest of God's inheritance to an injurious and alienate condition of laity, they separated from them by local partitions in churches, through their gross ignorance and pride imitating the old temple, and excluded the members of Christ from the property of being members, the bearing of orderly and fit offices in the ecclesiastical body, as if they had meant to sew up that Jewish veil which Christ by his death on the cross rent in sunder. Although these usurpers could not

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<sup>175</sup> Milton thought of Christ's command that injured brothers should plead with those who had offended them, if necessary, taking "one or two" with them, "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matt. xviii, 15-7), and of Paul's plea to the Thessalonians (II Thes. v, 12) "to know them which . . . are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." Cf. Introduction, #19.

<sup>176</sup> The Smectymnuans anticipated this attack on Hyginus in *An Answer* (p. 23) by grouping him with five others "whom the Papists call *Bishops*, and the popes *predecessours*," and by asserting that he is called a presbyter by Eusebius. In *The Ecclesiastical History* IV, x-xi, however, he is clearly recognized as the ninth bishop of Rome, and as having held the see for four years ?141-44 A.D. The *Liber Pontificalis* seems to be the source of the tradition that he drastically reorganized his clergy.



so presently overmaster the liberties and lawful titles of God's freeborn church, but that Origen,<sup>177</sup> being yet a layman, expounded the scriptures publicly and was therein defended by Alexander of Jerusalem and Theoctistus of Cæsarea, producing in his behalf divers examples that the privilege of teaching was anciently permitted to many worthy laymen: and Cyprian<sup>178</sup> in his epistles professes he will do nothing without the advice and assent of his assistant laics. Neither did the first Nicene<sup>179</sup> council, as great and learned as it was, think it any robbery to receive in and require the help and presence of many learned lay-brethren, as they were then called. Many other authorities to confirm this assertion both out of scripture and the

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<sup>177</sup> Fleeing from Caracalla's persecution at Alexandria (216 A.D.), Origen "was cordially welcomed by his old friend, Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, and subsequently by Theoktistes, Bishop of Caesarea, who jointly invited him to give expository lectures in their churches. . . . Although a layman, Origen acquiesced, to the no small displeasure of his own bishop, Demetrius. . . . The Palestinian bishops were able to plead precedents for what they had done," but when Demetrius insisted, Origen returned to Alexandria "as a teacher and student." (W. Fairweather, *Origen and Greek Patristic Theology*, 1901, p. 50.) In *A Defence of the Government* (p. 426) Bishop Bridges had admitted the point that Origen and several other Greek Fathers taught in churches as laymen. Cf. Introduction #26.

<sup>178</sup> Although Cyprian (?200-258 A.D.), the first African bishop martyr, insisted on the divine origin and authority of his order, he was careful to secure the support of his clergy, especially in matters involving church unity. His *Letters* (especially 5 and 10) were famous for their stress upon the participation of his presbyters in the assemblies which voted the adherence of his diocese to Pope Cornelius. Straining the evidence of such letters, the Smectymnuans wrote: "*Cyprian professeth, that hee would doe nothing without the Clergie; nay, he could doe nothing without them; nay, he durst not take upon him alone to determine that which of right did belong to all.*" (*An Answer*, p. 38.)

<sup>179</sup> At the Nicene Council (325 A.D.), says the church historian Socrates Scholasticus, "There were present also many of the laity, which were skillfull Logicians. . . . Before the Bishops met together, . . . the Logicians busied themselves propounding against divers others certain preambles of disputation, and when divers were thus drawne to disputation, . . . a Layman . . . of a simple and sincere mind set himselfe against the Logicians, told them thus in plaine wordes: that neither Christ nor his Apostles had delivered unto us the art of Logicke, . . . but an open and plaine mind to be preserved of us with faith and good workes." (Meredith Hanmer's translation, 1636, p. 221.)

writings of next antiquity, Golartius<sup>180</sup> hath collected in his notes upon Cyprian; whereby it will be evident that the laity, not only by apostolic permission but by consent of many the ancientest prelates, did participate in church offices as much as is desired any lay-elder should now do. Sometimes also not the elders alone, but the whole body of the church is interested in the work of discipline, as oft as public satisfaction is given by those that have given public scandal. Not to speak now of her right in elections. But another reason there is in it, which though religion did not commend to us, yet moral and civil prudence could not but extol. It was thought of old in philosophy that shame,<sup>181</sup> or to call it better, the reverence of our elders, our brethren, and friends, was the greatest incitement to virtuous deeds and the greatest dissuasion from unworthy attempts that might be. Hence we may read in the *Iliad*, where Hector<sup>182</sup> being wished to retire from the battle, many of his forces being routed, makes answer that he durst not for shame, lest the Trojan knights and dames should think he did ignobly. And certain it is, that whereas terror is thought such a great stickler in a commonwealth, honorable shame is a far greater, and has more reason. For where shame is, there is fear, but where fear is, there is not presently shame. And if anything may be done to inbreed in us this generous and Christianly reverence one of another, the very nurse and guardian of piety and virtue, it cannot sooner be than by such a discipline in the church as may use us to have in awe the assemblies of the faithful, and to count it a thing most grievous, next to the grieving of God's Spirit, to offend those whom he hath put in

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<sup>180</sup> S. Goulart the elder edited Cyprian in 1593 and revised and reissued the work at Paris in 1603 and 1607.

<sup>181</sup> Perhaps Milton thought of the modesty which Plato attributes (*Phaedrus* 253d) to the white horse which symbolizes the soul's best aspirations, or of the ending of Seneca's *Epistle* xi, "On Shame," which suggests that all serious men should follow the maxim of Epicurus which advises them to choose some revered person and live constantly as if they were in his presence.

<sup>182</sup> For the background of this allusion to *Iliad* XXII, 100, in Milton's mind cf. the first *Oratorical Performance*, note 1.

authority as a healing superintendence over our lives and behaviours, both to our own happiness and that we may not give offence to good men, who, without amends by us made, dare not against God's command hold communion with us in holy things. And this will be accompanied with a religious dread of being outcast from the company of saints and from the fatherly protection of God in his church, to consort with the devil and his angels. But there is yet a more ingenuous and noble degree of honest shame, or call it, if you will, an esteem, whereby men bear an inward reverence toward their own persons. And if the love of God, as a fire sent from heaven to be ever kept alive upon the altars of our hearts, be the first principle of all godly and virtuous actions in men, this pious and just honoring of ourselves is the second, and may be thought as the radical moisture and fountain-head whence every laudable and worthy enterprise issues forth. And although I have given it the name of a liquid thing,<sup>183</sup> yet is it not incontinent to bound itself, as humid things are, but hath in it a most restraining and powerful abstinence to start back and globe itself upward from the mixture of any ungenerous and unbecoming motion or any soil wherewith it may peril to stain itself. Something I confess it is to be ashamed of evil-doing in the presence of any, and to reverence the opinion and the countenance of a good man rather than a bad, fearing most in his sight to offend, goes so far as almost to be virtuous; yet this is but still the fear of infamy, and many such, when they find themselves alone, saving their reputation, will compound with other scruples and come to a close treaty with their dearer vices in secret. But he that holds himself in reverence and due esteem, both for the dignity of God's image upon him and for the price of his redemption, which he thinks is visibly marked upon his forehead, accounts himself both a fit person to do the

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<sup>183</sup> Perhaps the strange conception of love as a liquid force urgently springing up in the soul owes something to Plato's similar attempt to describe it in half-scientific and half-sensuous terms in *Phaedrus* 251c-e. Throughout the following passage the thought remains vaguely Platonic.

noblest and godliest deeds, and much better worth than to deject and defile with such a debasement and such a pollution as sin is, himself so highly ransomed and ennobled to a new friendship and filial relation with God. Nor can he fear so much the offence and reproach of others, as he dreads and would blush at the reflection of his own severe and modest eye upon himself, if it should see him doing or imagining that which is sinful, though in the deepest secrecy. How shall a man know to do himself this right, how to perform this honorable duty of estimation and respect towards his own soul and body? Which way will lead him best to this hill-top of sanctity and goodness above which there is no higher ascent but to the love of God, which from this self-pious regard cannot be asunder? No better way doubtless than to let him duly understand, that as he is called by the high calling of God to be holy and pure, so is he by the same appointment ordained, and by the church's call admitted, to such offices of discipline in the church, to which his own spiritual gifts by the example of apostolic institution have authorized him. For we have learned that the scornful term of laic, the consecrating of temples, carpets, and tablecloths, the railing in of a repugnant and contradictive mount Sinai<sup>184</sup> in the gospel, as if the touch of a lay-christian, who is nevertheless God's living temple, could profane dead judaisms, the exclusion of Christ's people from the offices of holy discipline through the pride of a usurping clergy causes the rest to have an unworthy and abject opinion of themselves, to approach to holy duties with a slavish fear and to unholy doings with a familiar boldness. For seeing such a wide and terrible distance between religious things and

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<sup>184</sup> Before the ceremonial and moral laws were revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai, God commanded him to "set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death." (Ex. xix, 12.) Archbishop Laud's policy of railing in the communion table seemed to the Puritans to be one of the most offensive aspects of his effort to exclude laymen from their full privileges and exalt the clergy to a position analogous with that enjoyed by the priests as their order was constituted by the ceremonial law of Moses.

themselves, and that in respect of a wooden table and the perimeter of holy ground about it, a flagon pot and a linen corporal,<sup>185</sup> the priest esteems their layships unhallowed and unclean, they fear religion with such a fear as loves not, and think the purity of the gospel too pure for them, and that any uncleanness is more suitable to their unconsecrated estate. But when every good Christian, thoroughly acquainted with all those glorious privileges of sanctification<sup>186</sup> and adoption which render him more sacred than any dedicated altar or element, shall be restored to his right in the church, and not excluded from such place of spiritual government as his Christian abilities and his approved good life in the eye and testimony of the church shall prefer him to, this and nothing sooner will open his eyes to a wise and true valuation of himself, which is so requisite and high a point of Christianity, and will stir him up to walk worthy the honorable and grave employment wherewith God and the church hath dignified him; not fearing lest he should meet with some outward holy thing in religion, which his lay-touch or presence might profane, but lest something unholy from within his own heart should dishonor and profane in himself that priestly unction and clergy-right whereto Christ hath entitled him. Then would the congregation of the Lord soon recover the true likeness and visage of what she is indeed, a holy generation, a royal priesthood,<sup>187</sup> a saintly communion, the

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<sup>185</sup> *corporal*: a communion cloth.

<sup>186</sup> Building upon scriptures like Hebrews x, 10, the Assembly of Divines sitting at Westminster when Milton wrote these words finally (in the Confession of 1647, chapter 12) defined Adoption as the grace whereby Christians are "taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father." The next chapter defines sanctification as a state in which, by the indwelling spirit of Christ, "the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof weakened and mortified"; so that Christians are "more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Cf. Milton, *Of Christian Doctrine*, I, xvii-xviii.

<sup>187</sup> Milton built upon a verse often quoted by champions of the doc-

household and city of God. And this I hold to be another considerable reason why the functions of church government ought to be free and open to any Christian man, though never so laic, if his capacity, his faith, and prudent demeanor commend him. And this the apostles warrant us to do. But the prelates object that this will bring profaneness into the church; to whom may be replied that none have brought that in more than their own irreligious courses, nor more driven holiness out of living into lifeless things. For whereas God, who hath cleansed every beast and creeping worm, would not suffer St. Peter to call them common or unclean,<sup>188</sup> the prelate bishops, in their printed orders hung up in churches, have proclaimed the best of creatures, mankind, so unpurified and contagious, that for him to lay his hat or his garment upon the chancel table they have defined it no less heinous, in express words, than to profane the table of the Lord. And thus have they by their Canaanitish doctrine<sup>189</sup> (for that which was to the Jew but Jewish, is to the Christian no better than Canaanitish), thus have they made common and unclean, thus have they made profane that nature which God hath not only cleansed, but Christ also hath assumed. And now that the equity and just reason is so perspicuous, why in ecclesiastic censure the assistance should be added of such as whom not the vile odor of

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trine of the right of all Christians to be regarded as priests rather than mere laymen: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Pet. ii, 9). Since Calvin had declared (*Institutes* III, xix) the liberty of Christians from the Jewish ceremonial and civil law, this verse had been a rallying cry of all who challenged the rights of any hierarchy which seemed to derive in any way from the Jewish priesthood.

<sup>188</sup> In a vision teaching that the Jewish ceremonial law which stigmatized the gentiles as unclean had been abrogated, St. Peter saw "four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air"; and he heard "a voice saying, Arise, Peter; slay and eat." To his objection that the beasts were unclean the voice answered "from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." (Acts xi, 5-10.)

<sup>189</sup> The Canaanites, whom the Israelites drove out of Palestine when they settled the land, remained a byword among them for idolatry.

gain and fees (forbid it, God, and blow it with a whirlwind out of our land), but charity, neighborhood, and duty to church government hath called together, where could a wise man wish a more equal, gratuitous, and meek examination of any offence, that he might happen to commit against Christianity, than here? Would he prefer those proud simoniactal<sup>190</sup> courts? Thus therefore the minister assisted attends his heavenly and spiritual cure: where we shall see him both in the course of his proceeding, and first in the excellency of his end, from the magistrate far different, and not more different than excelling. His end is to recover all that is of man, both soul and body, to an everlasting health; and yet as for worldly happiness, which is the proper sphere wherein the magistrate cannot but confine his motion without a hideous exorbitancy from law, so little aims the minister, as his intended scope, to procure the much prosperity of this life, that oftentimes he may have cause to wish much of it away, as a diet puffing up the soul with a slimy fleshiness and weakening her principal organic parts. Two heads of evil he has to cope with, ignorance and malice. Against the former he provides the daily manna of incorruptible doctrine, not at those set meals only in public, but as oft as he shall know that each infirmity or constitution requires. Against the latter with all the branches thereof, not meddling with that restraining and styptic surgery<sup>191</sup> which the law uses, not indeed against the malady but against the eruptions and outermost effects thereof; he on the contrary, beginning at the prime causes and roots of the disease, sends in those two divine ingredients of most cleansing power to the soul, admonition and reproof, besides which two there is no drug or antidote

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<sup>190</sup> Simony is the crime of buying or selling preferment in the church, or—more broadly—of trafficking in its authority in any way. The bishops' courts, which controlled questions of marriage, divorce, and other matters which had come to seem purely civil, often had to face that charge from the Puritans.

<sup>191</sup> In the background is Plato's presentation of Socrates as a physician for the Athenians who believes that he has a duty to continue his caustic criticism of their lives even though it will make him fatally unpopular. (*Gorgias*, 521a-522d.) Cf. note 22 above.

that can reach to purge the mind, and without which all other experiments are but vain, unless by accident. And he that will not let these pass into him, though he be the greatest king, as Plato<sup>192</sup> affirms, must be thought to remain impure within and unknowing of those things wherein his pureness and his knowledge should most appear. As soon therefore as it may be discerned that the Christian patient, by feeding elsewhere on meats not allowable but of evil juice, hath disordered his diet and spread an ill-humor through his veins, immediately disposing to a sickness, the minister, as being much nearer both in eye and duty than the magistrate, speeds him betimes to overtake that diffused malignance with some gentle potion of admonishment; or if aught be obstructed, puts in his opening and discussive confections.<sup>193</sup> This not succeeding after once or twice, or oftener, in the presence of two or three his faithful brethren appointed thereto, he advises him to be more careful of his dearest health, and what it is that he so rashly hath let down into the divine vessel of his soul, God's temple.<sup>194</sup> If this obtain not, he then, with the counsel of more assistants who are informed of what diligence hath been already used, with more speedy remedies lays nearer siege to the entrenched causes of his distemper, not sparing such fervent and well-aimed reproofs as may best give him to see the dangerous estate wherein he is. To this also his brethren and friends entreat, exhort, adjure, and all these endeavours, as there is hope left, are more or less repeated. But if neither the regard of himself nor the reverence of his elders and friends prevail with him to leave his vicious appetite, then as the time urges, such engines of terror God hath given into the hand of his minister as to search the tenderest angles of the heart: one while he shakes his stub-

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<sup>192</sup> Here Milton thought of the myth at the end of the *Gorgias* (525a-d), where Socrates describes the moderate punishments after death of those "who have profited by the correction of gods and men," in contrast with the severity to be shown, even though they were kings, to those who have been utterly recalcitrant.

<sup>193</sup> *discussive*: dissipative (of morbid matter in the body).

<sup>194</sup> "Ye are the temple of the Lord." (I Cor. iii, 16.)



bornness with racking convulsions nigh despair, otherwhiles with deadly corrosives he gripes the very roots of his faulty liver to bring him to life through the entry of death. Hereto the whole church beseech him, beg of him, deplore him, pray for him. After all this performed with what patience and attendance is possible, and no relenting on his part, having done the utmost of their cure, in the name of God and of the church they dissolve their fellowship with him, and holding forth the dreadful sponge of excommunication,<sup>195</sup> pronounce him wiped out of the list of God's inheritance and in the custody of Satan till he repent. Which horrid sentence, though it touch neither life nor limb, nor any worldly possession, yet has it such a penetrating force that swifter than any chemical sulphur or that lightning which harms not the skin and rifles the entrails, it scorches the inmost soul. Yet even this terrible denouncement is left to the church for no other cause but to be as a rough and vehement cleansing medicine where the malady is obdurate, a mortifying to life, a kind of saving by undoing. And it may be truly said that as the mercies of wicked men are cruelties, so the cruelties of the church are mercies. For if repentance sent from Heaven meet this lost wanderer and draw him out of that steep journey wherein he was hasting towards destruction, to come and reconcile to the church, if he bring with him his bill of health, and that he is now clear of infection and of no danger to the other sheep; then with incredible expressions of joy all his brethren receive him and set before him those perfumed banquets of Christian consolation; with precious ointments bathing and fomenting the old and now to be forgotten stripes, which terror and shame had inflicted; and thus with heavenly solaces they cheer up his humble remorse, till he regain his first health and felicity. This is the approved way which the gospel prescribes, these are the "spiritual weapons of holy censure, and ministerial warfare, not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, cast-

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<sup>195</sup> *excommunication*: excommunication. For the background of the entire passage cf. Introduction #19.

ing down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."<sup>196</sup> What could be done more for the healing and reclaiming that divine particle of God's breathing, the soul?<sup>197</sup> And what could be done less? He that would hide his faults from such a wholesome curing as this, and count it a twofold punishment, as some do, is like a man that having foul diseases about him, perishes for shame and the fear he has of a rigorous incision to come upon his flesh. We shall be able by this time to discern whether prelatical jurisdiction be contrary to the gospel or no. First, therefore, the government of the gospel being economical<sup>198</sup> and paternal, that is, of such a family where there be no servants, but all sons in obedience, not in servility,<sup>199</sup> as cannot be denied by him that lives but within the sound of scripture; how can the prelates justify to have turned the fatherly orders of Christ's household, the blessed meekness of his lowly roof, those ever-open and inviting doors of his dwelling house, which delight to be frequented with only filial accesses, how can they justify to have turned these domestic privileges into the bar of a proud judicial court, where fees and clamors keep shop and drive a trade, where bribery and corruption solicits, paltering the free and moneyless power of discipline with a carnal satisfaction by the purse. Contrition, humiliation, confession, the very sighs of a repentant spirit, are there sold by the penny. That undeflowered and unblemishable simplicity of the Gospel, not she herself, for that could never be, but a false-whited, a lawny resemblance of her, like that air-born<sup>200</sup> Helena in the

<sup>196</sup> II Corinthians x, 4-5.

<sup>197</sup> "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." (Gen. ii, 7.)

<sup>198</sup> *economical*: relating to the family, domestic.

<sup>199</sup> "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. viii, 14-5.)

<sup>200</sup> Milton perhaps thought of the story as told by Euripides, *Helen*, 31-51, that Hera deceived Paris with a phantom Helen, whom he took to Troy, while Hermes took the real Helen to Egypt.

fables, made by the sorcery of prelates, instead of calling her disciples from the receipt of custom, is now turned publican herself; and gives up her body to a mercenary whoredom under those fornicated arches, which she calls God's house, and in the sight of those her altars, which she hath set up to be adored, makes merchandise of the bodies and souls of men. Rejecting purgatory for no other reason, as it seems, than because her greediness cannot defer but had rather use the utmost extortion of redeemed penances in this life. But because these matters could not be thus carried without a begged and borrowed force from worldly authority, therefore prelaty, slighting the deliberate and chosen council of Christ in his spiritual government, whose glory is in the weakness of fleshly things,<sup>201</sup> to tread upon the crest of the world's pride and violence by the power of spiritual ordinances, hath on the contrary made these her friends and champions which are Christ's enemies in this his high design, smothering and extinguishing the spiritual force of his bodily weakness in the discipline of his church with the boisterous and carnal tyranny of an undue, unlawful, and ungospel-like jurisdiction. And thus prelaty, both in her fleshly supportments, in her carnal doctrine of ceremony and tradition, in her violent and secular power, going quite counter to the prime end of Christ's coming in the flesh, that is, to reveal his truth, his glory, and his might, in a clean contrary manner than prelaty seeks to do, thwarting and defeating the great mystery of God; I do not conclude that prelaty is anti-christian, for what need I? The things themselves conclude it. Yet if such like practices, and not many worse than these of our prelates, in that great darkness of the Roman church, have not exempted both her and her present members from being judged to be antichristian in all orthodoxal esteem; I cannot think but that it is the absolute voice of truth and all her children to pronounce this prelaty, and these her dark deeds in

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<sup>201</sup> "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." (II Cor. i, 12.)

the midst of this great light wherein we live, to be more anti-christian than antichrist himself.

## THE CONCLUSION.

### *The mischief that Prelaty does in the State.*

I ADD one thing more to those great ones that are so fond of prelaty: this is certain, that the gospel being the hidden might of Christ, as hath been heard, hath ever a victorious power joined with it, like him in the Revelation that went forth on the white horse with his bow and his crown, conquering and to conquer.<sup>202</sup> If we let the angel of the gospel ride on his own way, he does his proper business, conquering the high thoughts and the proud reasonings of the flesh, and brings them under to give obedience to Christ with the salvation of many souls. But if ye turn him out of his road, and in a manner force him to express his irresistible power by a doctrine of carnal might, as prelaty is, he will use that fleshly strength which ye put into his hands to subdue your spirits by a servile and blind superstition; and that again shall hold such dominion over your captive minds, as returning with an insatiate greediness and force upon your worldly wealth and power, wherewith to deck and magnify herself and her false worships, she shall spoil and havoc your estates, disturb your ease, diminish your honor, enthrall your liberty under the swelling mood of a proud clergy who will not serve or feed your souls with spiritual food; look not for it, they have not wherewithal, or if they had, it is not in their purpose. But when they have glutted their ungrateful bodies, at least if it be possible that those open sepulchres should ever be glutted, and when they have stuffed their idolish temples with the wasteful pillage of your estates, will they yet have any compassion upon you and that poor pittance which they have left you; will they be but so good to you as that

<sup>202</sup> The allusion is to Revelation vi, 2, and xix, 11. Cf. Introduction #22.

ravisher was to his sister, when he had used her at his pleasure;<sup>203</sup> will they but only hate ye, and so turn ye loose? No, they will not, Lords and Commons, they will not favor ye so much. What will they do then, in the name of God and saints, what will these manhaters yet with more despite and mischief do? I'll tell ye, or at least remember ye, for most of ye know it already. That they may want nothing to make them true merchants of Babylon,<sup>204</sup> as they have done to your souls, they will sell your bodies, your wives, your children, your liberties, your parliaments, all these things; and if there be aught else dearer than these, they will sell at an outcry in their pulpits to the arbitrary and illegal dispose of any one that may hereafter be called a king, whose mind shall serve him to listen to their bargain. And by their corrupt and servile doctrines boring our ears to an everlasting slavery,<sup>205</sup> as they have done hitherto, so will they yet do their best to repeal and erase every line and clause of both our great charters. Nor is this only what they will do, but what they hold as the main reason and mystery of their advancement that they must do; be the prince never so just and equal to his subjects, yet such are their malicious and depraved eyes that they so look on him and so understand him, as if he required no other gratitude or piece of service from

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<sup>203</sup> Milton refers to Amnon's incestuous violence to Tamar and his subsequent hatred of her, "so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her." (II Sam. xiii, 15.)

<sup>204</sup> Milton is voicing the bitter Puritan resentment of the defense of the royal power and even of such abuses of it as ship-money by the bishops in their sermons at court and elsewhere. Because Puritan prejudice identified them with the Roman Catholics, and because Rome was often called Babylon in Puritan parlance, he called them merchants of Babylon. Compare the popular saying: "All Babylon lies low; Luther destroyed the roof thereof, Calvin the walls, but Socinus the foundations." Cf. Rev. xviii, 10-11.

<sup>205</sup> The master of the Hebrew slave who voluntarily sought life-long servitude was to "bore his ear through with an awl" (Ex. xxi, 6) as a sign that his bondage was "forever." Puritan resistance to King Charles's infractions of popular rights constantly stressed Magna Charta and the Charter of Forests (1215 and 1216 respectively) as the foundation of the liberties which were vindicated by the Petition of Right, to which the king assented 7 June, 1628.

them than this. And indeed they stand so opportunely for the disturbing or the destroying of a state, being a knot of creatures whose dignities, means, and preferments have no foundation in the gospel, as they themselves acknowledge, but only in the prince's favor, and to continue so long to them, as by pleasing him they shall deserve: whence it must needs be they should bend all their intentions and services to no other ends but to his, that if it should happen that a tyrant (God turn such a scourge from us to our enemies) should come to grasp the sceptre, here were his spearmen and his lances, here were his firelocks ready, he should need no other Prætorian band<sup>206</sup> nor pensionary than these, if they could once with their perfidious preachments awe the people. For although the prelates in time of popery were sometimes friendly enough to Magna Charta,<sup>207</sup> it was because they stood upon their own bottom, without their main dependence on the royal nod: but now being well acquainted that the protestant religion, if she will reform herself rightly by the scriptures, must undress them of all their gilded vanities and reduce them as they were at first to the lowly and equal order of presbyters, they know it concerns them nearly to study the times more than the text, and to lift up their eyes to the hills<sup>208</sup> of the court from whence only comes their help; but if their pride grow weary of this crouching and observance, as ere long it would, and that yet their minds climb still to a higher ascent of worldly honor, this only refuge can remain to them, that they must of necessity contrive to bring themselves and us back again to the pope's supremacy; and this we see they had by fair degrees of late been doing. These be the two fair supporters between which

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<sup>206</sup> The bishops, Milton suggests, are threatening to become mere pensioners of the king and to make him the nominal head of a tyranny like that which the Prætorian guards of the Roman emperors developed under the pretense of protecting the imperial power and the rights of the emperors.

<sup>207</sup> Several bishops took an active part in extorting Magna Charta from King John in 1215, but their motives were always unfavorably interpreted by the Puritans. Cf. Introduction #21.

<sup>208</sup> An ironical application of Psalm cxxi, 1.

the strength of prelacy is borne up, either of inducing tyranny, or of reducing popery.<sup>209</sup> Hence also we may judge that prelacy is mere falsehood. For the property of truth is, where she is publicly taught, to unyoke and set free the minds and spirits of a nation first from the thralldom of sin and superstition, after which all honest and legal freedom of civil life cannot be long absent; but prelacy, whom the tyrant custom<sup>210</sup> begot, a natural tyrant in religion, and in state the agent and minister of tyranny, seems to have had this fatal gift in her nativity, like another Midas, that whatsoever she should touch or come near either in ecclesial or political government, it should turn, not to gold, though she for her part could wish it, but to the dross and scum of slavery, breeding and settling both in the bodies and the souls of all such as do not in time, with the sovrán treacle<sup>211</sup> of sound doctrine, provide to fortify their hearts against her hierarchy. The service of God, who is truth, her liturgy confesses to be perfect freedom,<sup>212</sup> but her works and her opinions declare, that the service of prelacy is perfect slavery, and by consequence perfect falsehood. Which makes me wonder much that many of the gentry, studious men as I hear, should engage themselves to write and speak publicly in her defence; but that I believe their honest and ingenuous natures coming to the universities to store themselves with good and solid learning and there unfortunately fed with nothing else but the scragged and thorny lectures of monkish and miserable sophistry,<sup>213</sup> were sent home again with such a scholastic

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<sup>209</sup> *reducing*: bringing back. Archbishop Laud's opponents, says Mr. Trevor-Roper (*Laud*, p. 306) "continually . . . attacked him as a Papist himself: and the charge, though we can see that it was untrue, was natural: nor was the subtle difference between the new high anglicanism and the old Rome likely to be appreciated by ears attuned to Puritan hysterics."

<sup>210</sup> Cf. the attack on custom in the opening paragraph of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*.

<sup>211</sup> *treacle*: originally, a remedy against the bites of poisonous creatures; a powerful antidote or medicine of any kind.

<sup>212</sup> The Collect for Peace in the Anglican Liturgy reads: "O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies. . . ."

burr in their throats as hath stopped and hindered all true and generous philosophy from entering, cracked their voices for ever with metaphysical gargarisms,<sup>214</sup> and hath made them admire a sort of formal outside men prelatically addicted; whose unchastened and unwrought minds (never yet initiated or subdued under the true lore of religion or moral virtue, which two are the best and greatest points of learning, but either slightly trained up in a kind of hypocritical and hackney course of literature to get their living by and dazzle the ignorant, or else fondly over-studied in useless controversies, except those which they use with all the specious and delusive subtlety they are able, to defend their prelatical Sparta<sup>215</sup>) having a gospel and church government set before their eyes, as a fair field wherein they might exercise the greatest virtues and the greatest deeds of Christian authority, in mean fortunes and little furniture of this world (which even the sage heathen writers, and those old Fabritii and Curii<sup>216</sup> well knew to be a manner of working, than which nothing could liken a mortal man more to God, who delights most to work from within himself, and not by the heavy luggage of corporeal instruments) they understand it not, and think no such matter, but admire and dote upon worldly riches and honors, with an easy and intemperate life, to the bane of Christianity. Yea, they and their seminaries shame not to profess, to petition, and never lin pealing<sup>217</sup> our ears, that unless we fat them like boars, and cram them as they list with wealth, with deaneries and plurali-

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<sup>213</sup> Cf. Introduction #2, the attack on the medieval corruption of the universities in the seventh *Oratorical Performance*, and the attack on "universities not yet recovered from scholastic grossness" in *Of Education*.

<sup>214</sup> *gargarisms*: gargles.

<sup>215</sup> Churchmen who enjoyed theological controversy, Milton suggests, are like the ancient Spartans, good but rough defenders of their city, sacrificing both character and culture to brutal gladiatorial skill.

<sup>216</sup> Gaius Fabricius was famous in Roman history for having refused the bribes of King Pyrrhus when they were negotiating about an exchange of prisoners in 282 B.C., and for his severity when he became censor in 275. His contemporary, Marcus Curius Dentatus, defeated Pyrrhus in that year and refused his immense share, as a consul, in the booty.

<sup>217</sup> *lin*: cease. *pealing*: assailing with noise, nagging. Cf. *S. A.*, 235.



ties,<sup>218</sup> with baronies and stately preferments, all learning and religion will go underfoot. Which is such a shameless, such a bestial plea, and of that odious impudence in churchmen, who should be to us a pattern of temperance and frugal mediocrity,<sup>219</sup> who should teach us to condemn this world and the gaudy things thereof, according to the promise which they themselves require from us in baptism,<sup>220</sup> that should the scripture stand by and be mute, there is not that sect of philosophers among the heathen so dissolute, no not Epicurus, nor Aristippus<sup>221</sup> with all his Cyrenaic rout, but would shut his school-doors against such greasy sophisters; not any college of mountebanks, but would think scorn to discover<sup>222</sup> in themselves with such a brazen forehead the outrageous desire of filthy lucre. Which the prelates make so little conscience of that they are ready to fight and, if it lay in their power, to massacre all good Christians under the names of horrible schismatics, for only finding fault with their temporal dignities, their unconscionable wealth and revenues, their cruel authority over their brethren that labor in the word, while they snore in their luxurious excess: openly proclaiming themselves now in

<sup>218</sup> *pluralities*: enjoyment of two or more benefices simultaneously by a clergyman. In defending them in *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* V, lxxxii, Hooker first inveighed as vigorously as any Puritan could against their abuse, but committed himself (#7) to them "by way of honour to learning, nobility, and authority." "The brethren and sons of lords temporal and knights, if God shall move the hearts of such to enter at any time into holy orders," he felt, should "obtain to themselves a faculty or license to hold two ecclesiastical livings."

<sup>219</sup> *mediocrity*: moderate estate, humble style of living.

<sup>220</sup> The Anglican Liturgy asks the sponsors of a child at baptism to renounce on his behalf "the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all the covetous desires of the same. . . ."

<sup>221</sup> "Who can but pity the virtuous Epicurus," asked Thomas Browne in *Vulgar Errors* VII, xvii, "who is commonly conceived to have placed his chief felicity in pleasure and sensual delights, and hath therefore left an infamous name behind him? . . . The ground hereof seems a misapprehension of his opinion, who placed his felicity not in the pleasures of the body, but the mind, and tranquillity thereof, obtained by wisdom and virtue." Aristippus was traditionally regarded as "luxurious," but Milton perhaps remembered that he left his native Cyrene to spend years in study with Socrates in Athens.

<sup>222</sup> *discover*: expose, exhibit.

the sight of all men to be those which for a while they sought to cover under sheep's clothing, ravenous and savage wolves<sup>223</sup> threatening inroads and bloody incursions upon the flock of Christ, which they took upon them to feed, but now claim to devour as their prey. More like that huge dragon of Egypt breathing out waste and desolation to the land, unless he were daily fattened with virgin's blood. Him our old patron St. George<sup>224</sup> by his matchless valor slew, as the prelate of the garter that reads his collect<sup>225</sup> can tell. And if our princes and knights will imitate the fame of that old champion, as by their order of knighthood solemnly taken they vow, far be it that they should uphold and side with this English dragon; but rather to do as indeed their oath binds them, they should make it their knightly adventure to pursue and vanquish this mighty

<sup>223</sup> Cf. Introduction #21.

<sup>224</sup> One early version of the St. George legend localizes the dragon near Selena in Libya, and the tale finds some support from inscriptions in ancient Egyptian churches. Though Milton does not refer to Spenser's story of a dragon which represents the Roman hierarchy and is slain by a St. George who is the British champion (*Faerie Queene* I, xi), he knew that his readers would enjoy his suggestion that King Charles's Knights of the Garter, whose patron was St. George, should destroy the prelatical dragon and rescue the innocent virgin whom he identifies, like Spenser, with the daughter of the King of Heaven, the Church.

<sup>225</sup> The collect in question occurs in the *Primer according to the Usage of Salisbury* and is translated by Peter Heylin in *The History of that most famous Saynt and Souldier of Christ Jesus, St. George of Cappadocia* (1631) in this way, in part:

George, holy Martyr, praise and fame  
Attend upon thy glorious name;  
Advanced to knightly dignitie:  
The Daughter of a King, by thee  
(As she was making grievous moane  
By a fierce Dragon, all alone)  
Was freed from death. Thee we entreat  
That we in Heaven may have a seat.

Puritan feeling had long been outraged by the admission of certain clergy to the Order of the Garter. Archbishop Whitgift devoted several pages in *The Defence of the Answer to the Admonition* (*The Works of John Whitgift*, Parker Society, 1853, III, 405 ff.) to a reply to the charge that it was "against the word of God . . . for an archbishop to be a lord president, a lord bishop to be a county palatine, a prelate of the Garter, who hath much to do at St. George's feast, when the Bible is carried before the procession in the cross's place," etc.

sail-winged monster that menaces to swallow up the land, unless her bottomless gorge may be satisfied with the blood of the king's daughter, the church; and may, as she was wont, fill her dark and infamous den with the bones of the saints. Nor will anyone have reason to think this as too incredible or too tragical to be spoken of prelaty, if he consider well from what a mass of slime and mud, the slothful, the covetous, and ambitious hopes of church-promotions and fat bishoprics, she is bred up and nuzzled in, like a great Python,<sup>226</sup> from her youth, to prove the general poison both of doctrine and good discipline in the land. For certainly such hopes and such principles of earth as these wherein she welters from a young one, are the immediate generation both of a slavish and tyrannous life to follow and a pestiferous contagion to the whole kingdom, till like that fen-born serpent she be shot to death with the darts of the sun, the pure and powerful beams of God's word. And this may serve to describe to us in part what prelaty hath been and what, if she stand, she is like to be towards the whole body of people in England. Now that it may appear how she is not such a kind of evil as hath any good or use in it, which many evils have, but a distilled quintessence, a pure elixir of mischief, pestilent alike to all, I shall show briefly, ere I conclude, that the prelates, as they are to the subjects a calamity, so are they the greatest underminers and betrayers of the monarch, to whom they seem to be most favorable. I cannot better liken the state and person of a king than to that mighty Nazarite Samson;<sup>227</sup> who, being disciplined

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<sup>226</sup> Ovid tells (*Metamorphoses* I, 433-51) the story of the slime-born serpent, Python, which Apollo, the sun god, slew with his darting rays. The myth goes back to the Homeric hymn to Apollo and was sometimes confused with that of the earth-born Typhon, a half-serpentine monster, whose attack upon the Olympian gods is sung in Hesiod's *Theogony* (820-880) and explained by Natale Conti (*Mythologiae* VI, xxii) as an allegory of tyrannous ambition attacking the laws of heaven.

<sup>227</sup> This dramatic outline of the story of Samson from Judges xiii-xvi, compares interestingly with Milton's plans for various dramas on the subject in the Cambridge Manuscript as well as with his treatment of it in the drama of *Samson Agonistes*.

from his birth in the precepts and the practice of temperance and sobriety, without the strong drink of injurious and excessive desires, grows up to a noble strength and perfection with those his illustrious and sunny locks, the laws,<sup>228</sup> waving and curling about his godlike shoulders. And while he keeps them about him undiminished and unshorn, he may with the jaw-bone of an ass, that is, with the word of his meanest officer, suppress and put to confusion thousands of those that rise against his just power. But laying down his head among the strumpet flatteries of prelates,<sup>229</sup> while he sleeps and thinks no harm, they, wickedly shaving off all those bright and weighty tresses of his laws and just prerogatives, which were his ornament and strength, deliver him over to indirect and violent counsels, which, as those Philistines, put out the fair and far-sighted eyes of his natural discerning and make him grind in the prisonhouse of their sinister ends and practices upon him: till he, knowing this prelatical razor to have bereft him of his wonted might, nourish again his puissant hair, the golden beams of law and right; and they sternly shook, thunder with ruin upon the heads of those his evil counsellors, but not without great affliction to himself. This is the sum of their loyal service to kings; yet these are the men that still cry, "The king, the king, the Lord's anointed!" We grant it, and wonder how they came to light upon anything so true; and wonder more, if kings be the Lord's anointed, how they dare thus oil over and besmear so holy an unction with the corrupt and putrid oint-

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<sup>228</sup> This is a final allusion to Plato's *Laws*. In Book IV (715d) Law is said to be rightly lord over the magistrates, while they should be the servants of the Law. Plato saw prosperity and every blessing of the gods in states where that principle was honored, and ruin impending everywhere that it was violated. Cf. *Tenure*, note 40.

<sup>229</sup> Milton's thought here is a commonplace of Puritan propaganda. In *An Appeal to the Parliament* (p. 212) Leighton warned that Charles was about to "split upon the rocks of malicious Counsell, or sinke in the quicksands of base flatteries." The bishops, he said (p. 25) were "opposite to the King and his Lawes, in affirming their calling to be *jure divino*, because by his Laws they are said to be a part of his prerogative." The argument goes directly on to describe their attack on the king and the law as nothing short of treason.

ment of their base flatteries, which, while they smooth the skin, strike inward and envenom the lifeblood.<sup>230</sup> What fidelity kings can expect from prelates both examples past and our present experience of their doings at this day, whereon is grounded all that hath been said, may suffice to inform us. And if they be such clippers of regal power and shavers of the laws, how they stand affected to the lawgiving parliament, yourselves, worthy peers and commons, can best testify, the current of whose glorious and immortal actions hath been only opposed by the obscure and pernicious designs of the prelates, until their insolence broke out to such a bold affront as hath justly immured their haughty looks within strong walls.<sup>231</sup> Nor have they done anything of late with more diligence than to hinder or break the happy assembling of parliaments, however needful to repair the shattered and disjointed frame of the commonwealth, or if they cannot do this, to cross, to disable, and traduce all parliamentary proceedings. And this, if nothing else, plainly accuses them to be no lawful members of the house, if they thus perpetually mutiny against their own body. And though they pretend, like Solomon's harlot,<sup>232</sup> that they have right thereto, by the same judgment that Solomon gave, it cannot belong to them, whenas it is not only their assent but their endeavor continually to divide parliaments in twain; and not only by dividing but by all other means to abol-

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<sup>230</sup> Cf. Lord Brooke's *Discourse opening the Nature of Episcopacy* (p. 60): "What meanes their crying up an unjust and illimited power in Princes? Is not This their bleating out of an illegal unwarranted Pre-rogative (with which our pulpits have rung of late) intended to tickle Princes till they be luld asleepe? or to sow pillowes under them, till They themselves can thrust them downe; not onely from that Tyranny which Bishops would perswade them to usurp, but also from their wholsome and lawfull prerogative?"

<sup>231</sup> In December, 1641, twelve bishops, who were afraid of rough handling by the mob, failed to attend the sessions of the House of Lords and made the mistake of protesting to Charles that all legislation passed in their absence was invalid. They were impeached for this illegal claim and ten of them were immediately placed in the Tower of London.

<sup>232</sup> I Kings iii, 16-27, tells the story of Solomon's judgment between two harlots who claimed the same child. At his command to "divide the living child in two," the true mother identified herself by yielding her claim.

ish and destroy the free use of them to all posterity. For the which and for all their former misdeeds, whereof this book and many volumes more cannot contain the moiety, I shall move ye, Lords, in the behalf I dare say of many thousand good Christians, to let your justice and speedy sentence pass against this great malefactor, prelaty. And yet in the midst of rigor I would beseech ye to think of mercy; and such a mercy (I fear I shall overshoot with a desire to save this falling prelaty), such a mercy (if I may venture to say it) as may exceed that which for only ten righteous persons would have saved Sodom.<sup>233</sup> Not that I dare advise ye to contend with God whether he or you shall be more merciful, but in your wise esteems to balance the offences of those peccant<sup>234</sup> cities with these enormous riots of ungodly misrule that prelaty hath wrought both in the church of Christ and in the state of this kingdom. And if ye think ye may with a pious presumption strive to go beyond God in mercy, I shall not be one now that would dissuade ye. Though God for less than ten just persons would not spare Sodom, yet if you can find after due search but only one good thing in prelaty, either to religion or civil government, to king or parliament, to prince or people, to law, liberty, wealth, or learning, spare her, let her live, let her spread among ye, till with her shadow all your dignities and honors, and all the glory of the land be darkened and obscured. But on the contrary, if she be found to be malignant, hostile, destructive to all these, as nothing can be surer, then let your severe and impartial doom imitate the divine vengeance; rain<sup>235</sup> down your punishing force upon this godless and oppressing government, and bring such a dead sea of subversion upon her that she may never in this land rise more to afflict the holy reformed church, and the elect people of God.

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<sup>233</sup> When Abraham asked God not to destroy Sodom if as many as ten righteous men were to be found there, he received God's promise that he would "not destroy it for ten's sake." (Gen. xviii, 32.)

<sup>234</sup> *peccant*: sinful.

<sup>235</sup> "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." (Gen. xix, 24.)

*A Selection from*

AN APOLOGY AGAINST A PAMPHLET CALLED  
“A MODEST CONFUTATION OF THE ANI-  
MADVERSIONS UPON THE REMONSTRANT  
AGAINST SMECTYMNUS.” (1642)

THUS having spent his first onset not in confuting but in a reasonless defaming of the book, the method of his malice hurries him<sup>1</sup> to attempt the like against the author; not by proofs and testimonies, but “having no certain notice of me,” as he professes, “further than what he gathers from the *Animadversions*,” blunders at me for the rest, and flings out stray crimes at a venture, which he could never, though he be a serpent, suck from anything that I have written, but from his own stuffed magazine and hoard of slanderous inventions, over and above that which he converted to venom in the drawing. To me, readers, it happens as a singular contentment, and let it be to good men no slight satisfaction, that the slanderer here confesses he has “no further notice of me than his own conjecture.” Although it had been honest to have inquired before he uttered such infamous words, and I am credibly informed he did inquire; but finding small comfort from the intelligence which he received, whereon to ground the falsities which he had provided, thought it his likeliest course under a pretended ignorance to let drive at random, lest he should lose his odd

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<sup>1</sup> *him*: Bishop Joseph Hall, whom Milton took for part author of *A Modest Confutation of A Slanderous and Scurrilous Libell, Entitled, Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnuus* (1642). This tract is reprinted by W. R. Parker in *Milton's Contemporary Reputation*. Cf. Introduction #17-9.

ends which from some penurious book of characters<sup>2</sup> he had been culling out and would fain apply. Not caring to burden me with those vices whereof, among whom my conversation hath been, I have been ever least suspected; perhaps not without some subtlety to cast me into envy, by bringing on me a necessity to enter into mine own praises. In which argument I know every wise man is more unwillingly drawn to speak than the most repining ear can be averse to hear.

Nevertheless, since I dare not wish to pass this life unpersecuted of slanderous tongues, for God hath told us that to be generally praised is woeful,<sup>3</sup> I shall rely on his promise to free the innocent from causeless aspersions: whereof nothing sooner can assure me than if I shall feel him now assisting me in the just vindication of myself, which yet I could defer, it being more meet that to those other matters of public debatement in this book I should give attendance first, but that I fear it would but harm the truth for me to reason in her behalf, so long as I should suffer my honest estimation to lie unpurged from these insolent suspicions. And if I shall be large or unwonted in justifying myself to those who know me not (for else it would be needless) let them consider that a short slander will oftentimes reach further than a long apology; and that he who will do justly to all men, must begin from knowing how, if it so happen, to be not unjust to himself. I must be thought, if this libeller (for now he shows himself to be so) can find belief, after an inordinate and riotous youth spent at the university, to have been at length "vomited out thence."<sup>4</sup> For which commodious lie, that he may be encouraged in the trade another time, I thank him; for it hath given me an apt occasion to

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<sup>2</sup> *book of characters*: an allusion to Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices* (1608), the most successful of his early bids for literary fame. It was translated into French in 1610, and in 1691 was versified by Nahum Tate.

<sup>3</sup> "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you." (Luke vi, 26.)

<sup>4</sup> Milton's rustication from Cambridge in the Lent Term of 1626 seems to have been trivial. The best commentary on it is his *Elegy 1*. Cf. Introduction #1.



acknowledge publicly with all grateful mind that more than ordinary favor and respect which I found above any of my equals<sup>5</sup> at the hands of those courteous and learned men, the fellows of that college wherein I spent some years: who at my parting, after I had taken two degrees, as the manner is, signified many ways how much better it would content them that I would stay; as by many letters full of kindness and loving respect, both before that time and long after, I was assured of their singular good affection towards me. Which being likewise propense to all such as were for their studious and civil life worthy of esteem, I could not wrong their judgments and upright intentions so much as to think I had that regard from them for other cause than that I might be still encouraged to proceed in the honest and laudable courses of which they apprehended I had given good proof. And to those ingenuous and friendly men who were ever the countenancers of virtuous and hopeful wits, I wish the best and happiest things that friends in absence wish one to another.

As for the common approbation or dislike of that place as now it is, that I should esteem or disesteem myself or any other the more for that, too simple and too credulous is the confuter, if he think to obtain with me or any right discerner. Of small practice were that physician who could not judge by what both she or her sister<sup>6</sup> hath of long time vomited, that the worser stuff she strongly keeps in her stomach, but the better she is ever kecking at, and is queasy. She vomits now out of sickness, but ere it will be well with her, she must vomit by strong physic. In the meanwhile that "suburb<sup>7</sup> sink," as this rude scavenger calls it—and more than scurrilously taunts it with the plague, having a worse plague in his middle entrail—that suburb wherein I dwell shall be in my account a more honorable place than his university. Which, as in the time of her

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<sup>5</sup> *equals*: contemporaries, persons of about the same age.

<sup>6</sup> *her sister*: Oxford.

<sup>7</sup> The *Confutation* had accused Milton of haunting places of bad repute in the London suburbs.

better health and mine own younger judgment I never greatly admired, so now much less. But he follows me to the city, still usurping<sup>8</sup> and forging beyond his book notice, which only he affirms to have had; "and where my morning haunts are, he wisses not." 'Tis wonder that, being so rare an alchemist of slander, he could not extract that, as well as the university vomit and the suburb sink which his art could distil so cunningly; but because his limbeck<sup>9</sup> fails him, to give him and envy the more vexation, I'll tell him. Those morning haunts are where they should be, at home; not sleeping or concocting<sup>10</sup> the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring, in winter often ere the sound of any bell awake men to labor or to devotion; in summer as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or memory have its full fraught: then, with useful and generous labors preserving the body's health and hardiness to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience<sup>11</sup> to the mind, to the cause of religion, and our country's liberty, when it shall require firm hearts in sound bodies to stand and cover their stations, rather than to see the ruin of our protestation and the inforcement of a slavish life.

These are the morning practices: proceed now to the afternoon; "in playhouses," he says, "and the bordelloes." Your intelligence, unfaithful spy of Canaan?<sup>12</sup> He gives in his evidence, that "there he hath traced me." Take him at his word, readers, but let him bring good sureties ere ye dismiss him, that while he pretended to dog others, he did not turn in for his own pleasure: for so much in effect he concludes against himself, not contented to be caught in every other gin,<sup>13</sup> but he

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<sup>8</sup> *usurping*: presuming, going beyond the evidence.

<sup>9</sup> *limbeck*: an alembic, an alchemist's device for distilling various chemicals.

<sup>10</sup> *concocting*: digesting. Cf. *Of Education*, note 102.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the part of athletics in *Of Education*, note 95.

<sup>12</sup> The spies whom Moses sent into Canaan, "returned, . . . bringing up a slander upon the land." (Num. xiv, 36.)

<sup>13</sup> *gin*: a trap or snare for game.

must be such a novice as to be still hampered in his own hemp. In the *Animadversions*,<sup>14</sup> saith he, I find the mention of old cloaks, false beards, night-walkers, and salt lotion; therefore, the animadverter haunts playhouses and bordelloes; for if he did not, how could he speak of such gear? Now that he may know what it is to be a child and yet to meddle with edged tools, I turn his antistrophon<sup>15</sup> upon his own head; the confuter knows that these things are the furniture of playhouses and bordelloes, therefore, by the same reason, "the confuter himself hath been traced in those places." Was it such a dissolute speech, telling of some politicians who were wont to eavesdrop in disguises, to say they were often liable to a nightwalking cudgeller, or the emptying of a urinal? What if I had written as your friend the author of the aforesaid mime, *Mundus alter et idem*,<sup>16</sup> to have been ravished like some young Cephalus<sup>17</sup> or Hylas<sup>18</sup> by a troop of camping housewives in Viraginea, and that he was there forced to swear himself an uxorious varlet; then after a long servitude to have come into Aphrodisia, that pleasant country, that gave such a sweet smell to his nostrils among the shameless courtezans of Desvergonia? Surely he would have then concluded me as constant at the bordello as the galley-slave at his oar.

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<sup>14</sup> Milton's *Animadversions* had been scurrilous enough to provoke his opponents to similar tactics.

<sup>15</sup> *antistrophon*: the rhetorical figure of retort or turning of a quip or argument back upon an opponent.

<sup>16</sup> In the paragraph immediately before the opening of this extract, Milton has alluded to Hall's *Mundus alter et idem* as "the idlest and paltriest mime that ever mounted upon bank," and compared its imaginary voyage to a land of viragos (Viraginea), a land of pleasant romance (Aphrodisia), and a land of shameless debauchery (Desvergognia)—much to its disadvantage—with More's *Utopia* and Bacon's *New Atlantis*. The first edition was in 1605, and the English translation as *The Discovery of a New World*, in 1608.

<sup>17</sup> Cephalus, according to the story retold by Ovid in *Metamorphoses* VII, 700–13, was snatched away from his wife, Procris, by the goddess of the dawn, Aurora.

<sup>18</sup> One of the most familiar and least admirable features of the story of Hercules, according to Natale Conti (*Mythologiae* VII, i), was his seizure of Hylas and his passion for the youth.

But since there is such necessity to the hearsay of a tire,<sup>19</sup> a periwig, or a vizard,<sup>20</sup> that plays must have been seen, what difficulty was there in that, when in the colleges so many of the young divines, and those in next aptitude to divinity, have been seen so oft upon the stage, writhing and unboning their clergy limbs to all the antic and dishonest gestures of Trinculos,<sup>21</sup> buffoons, and bawds, prostituting the shame of that ministry, which either they had or were nigh having, to the eyes of courtiers and court ladies, with their grooms and mademoiselles. There, while they acted and overacted, among other young scholars, I was a spectator; they thought themselves gallant men, and I thought them fools; they made sport, and I laughed; they mispronounced, and I misliked; and, to make up the atticism, they were out, and I hissed. Judge now whether so many good textmen were not sufficient to instruct me of false beards and vizards, without more expositors; and how can this confuter take the face to object to me the seeing of that which his reverend prelates allow, and incite their young disciples to act? For if it be unlawful<sup>22</sup> to sit and behold a mercenary comedian personating that which is least unseemly for a hireling to do, how much more blameful is it to endure the sight of as vile things acted by persons either entered, or presently to enter into the ministry, and how much more foul and ignominious for them to be the actors!

But because, as well by this upbraiding to me the bordelloes, as by other suspicious glancings in his book, he would seem

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<sup>19</sup> *tire*: costume.

<sup>20</sup> *vizard*: mask.

<sup>21</sup> One of the Trinculos in the background is Shakespeare's drunken sailor in *The Tempest* III, ii; but Milton probably thought of Thomas Tomkys' Trincalo in *Albumazar*, a rustic who confesses: "I am idle, choicely neate in my cloathes, valiant, and extreame witty: My meditations are loaded with metaphors, and songs and sonnets: Not a one shakes his tayle, but I sigh out a passion; thus doe I to my Mistris: But alas I kisse the dogge, and she kicks me." (Act II, i.) The play was acted at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1614, and published in the next year and several times in the course of the following quarter-century.

<sup>22</sup> Milton was writing within almost a year of the closing of the theatres by Parliament.

privily to point me out to his readers as one whose custom of life were not honest but licentious, I shall entreat to be borne with, though I digress; and in a way not often trod, acquaint ye with the sum of my thoughts in this matter, through the course of my years and studies: although I am not ignorant how hazardous it will be to do this under the nose of the envious, as it were in skirmish to change the compact order,<sup>23</sup> and instead of outward actions, to bring inmost thoughts into front. And I must tell ye, readers, that by this sort of men I have been already bitten at; yet shall they not for me know how slightly they are esteemed, unless they have so much learning as to read what in Greek ἀπειροκαλία<sup>24</sup> is, which, together with envy, is the common disease of those who censure books that are not for their reading. With me it fares now as with him whose outward garment hath been injured and ill-bedighted; for having no other shift, what help but to turn the inside outwards, especially if the lining be of the same, or, as it is sometimes, much better? So if my name and outward demeanor be not evident enough to defend me, I must make trial if the discovery of my inmost thoughts can: wherein of two purposes, both honest and both sincere, the one perhaps I shall not miss; although I fail to gain belief with others of being such as my perpetual thoughts shall here disclose me, I may yet not fail of success in persuading some to be such really themselves, as they cannot believe me to be more than what I feign.

I had my time, readers, as others have who have good learning bestowed upon them, to be sent to those places where, the opinion was, it might be soonest attained; and as the manner is, was not unstudied in those authors which are most commended. Whereof some were grave orators and historians, whose matter methought I loved indeed, but as my age then was, so I understood them; others were the smooth elegiac poets, whereof the

<sup>23</sup> *compact order*: i.e. of soldiers in close order in a square formation when the inner and outer ranks change positions.

<sup>24</sup> ἀπειροκαλία: bad taste such as produces bad conduct. Plato uses the word in the *Republic* (403c and 405b) of the propensities to undue physical intimacy and to litigiousness.

schools are not scarce, whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous<sup>25</sup> writing, which in imitation I found most easy and most agreeable to nature's part in me, and for their matter, which what it is, there be few who know not, I was so allured to read that no recreation came to me better welcome. For that it was then those years with me which are excused, though they be least severe, I may be saved the labor to remember ye. Whence having observed them to account it the chief glory of their wit, in that they were ablest to judge, to praise, and by that could esteem themselves worthiest to love those high perfections which under one or other name they took to celebrate; I thought with myself by every instinct and presage of nature, which is not wont to be false, that what emboldened them to this task, might with such diligence as they used embolden me; and that what judgment, wit, or elegance was my share, would herein best appear, and best value itself, by how much more wisely, and with more love of virtue I should choose (let rude ears be absent)<sup>26</sup> the object of not unlike praises. For albeit these thoughts to some will seem virtuous and commendable, to others only pardonable, to a third sort perhaps idle; yet the mentioning of them now will end in serious.

Nor blame it, readers, in those years to propose to them selves such a reward, as the noblest dispositions above other things in this life have sometimes preferred: whereof not to be sensible when good and fair in one person meet, argues both a gross and shallow judgment, and withal an ungentle and swainish breast. For by the firm settling of these persuasions, I became, to my best memory, so much a proficient that, if I found those authors anywhere speaking unworthy things of themselves or unchaste of those names which before they had extolled, this effect it wrought with me, from that time forward their art I

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<sup>25</sup> *numerous*: rhythmic because metrical. Cf. Milton's allusion to "numbers" as "various-measur'd verse" in *P.R.* IV, 255-6.

<sup>26</sup> A reminiscence of classical warnings, like that of the seer in Virgil's *Aeneid* VI, 258, to all profane persons to keep their distance from a sacred place.

still applauded, but the men I deplored; and above them all, preferred the two famous renowners of Beatrice and Laura,<sup>27</sup> who never write but honor of them to whom they devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts, without transgression. And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem,<sup>28</sup> that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things—not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy. These reasonings, together with a certain niceness of nature, an honest haughtiness and self-esteem either of what I was, or what I might be (which let envy call pride), and lastly that modesty,<sup>29</sup> whereof, though not in the title-page, yet here I may be excused to make some beseeeming profession; all these uniting the supply of their natural aid together, kept me still above those low descents of mind beneath which he must deject and plunge himself that can agree to saleable and unlawful prostitutions.

Next, (for hear me out now, readers,) that I may tell ye whither my younger feet wandered; I betook me among those lofty fables and romances,<sup>30</sup> which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had in renown over all Christendom. There I read it in the oath of every knight, that he should defend to the expense of his best blood, or of his life if it so befell him, the honor and chastity of virgin or matron; from whence even then I learned what a noble virtue chastity sure must be, to the defence of which so many worthies, by such a dear adventure

<sup>27</sup> Milton thought of Dante's idealization of Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova* and the *Paradiso* and of Petrarch's idealization of Laura in his *Canzoniere*.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Reason of Church Government*, note 140.

<sup>29</sup> modesty: cf. *Reason of Church Government*, note 181.

<sup>30</sup> The best evidence of the hold that medieval romance once had on Milton's imagination is in *P.L.* IX, 27–37. Perhaps the reference here is to treatments of the Arthurian legends like Malory's, and to Milton's early ambition to write a "British" epic. Cf. *Manso*, 80–8.

of themselves, had sworn. And if I found in the story afterward, any of them, by word or deed, breaking that oath, I judged it the same fault of the poet as that which is attributed to Homer,<sup>31</sup> to have written indecent things of the gods. Only this my mind gave me, that every free and gentle spirit, without that oath, ought to be born a knight, nor needed to expect the gilt spur, or the laying of a sword upon his shoulder to stir him up both by his counsel and his arm, to secure and protect the weakness of any attempted chastity. So that even these books which to many others have been the fuel of wantonness and loose living, I cannot think how, unless by divine indulgence, proved to me so many incitements, as you have heard, to the love and steadfast observation of that virtue which abhors the society of bordelloes.

Thus, from the laureate fraternity of poets, riper years and the ceaseless round of study and reading led me to the shady spaces of philosophy, but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato<sup>32</sup> and his equal,<sup>33</sup> Xenophon: where, if I should tell ye what I learnt of chastity and love (I mean that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only virtue, which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy—the rest are cheated with a thick intoxicating potion, which a certain sorceress, the abuser of love's

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<sup>31</sup> Milton was thinking of Plato's criticism of Homer for drawing morally unsatisfactory portraits of the gods and heroes. (*Republic*, 377e.)

<sup>32</sup> The influence of Plato's treatment of love in the *Symposium* upon Milton is amply proved in *Reason of Church Government* (cf. notes 181 and 183) and in *Comus* (cf. notes on lines 785 and 1004-7). The sorceress mentioned below is Circe,

The daughter of the Sun. Whose charmed Cup  
Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,  
And downward fell into a groveling Swine.  
(*Comus*, 49-52.)

And the "happy twins, . . . knowledge and virtue," seem to be the prudence and virtue which Diotima taught Socrates were the offspring of the pregnancy of soul which is caused by love. (*Symposium*, 209a.)

<sup>33</sup> Milton describes Xenophon (?430-?359 B.C.) as Plato's equal in the sense that he was contemporary with Plato. (Cf. note 5 above.) Doubtless he set a high value on Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, or recollections of Socrates' practical teachings presented specifically to refute the charge of corrupting youth, for which the Athenians condemned him to death.



name, carries about) and how the first and chiefest office of love begins and ends in the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, knowledge and virtue. With such abstracted sublimities as these, it might be worth your listening, readers, as I may one day hope to have ye in a still time, when there shall be no chiding; not in these noises, the adversary, as ye know, barking at the door, or searching for me at the bordelloes, where it may be he has lost himself, and raps up without pity the sage and rheumatic old prelatess with all her young Corinthian<sup>34</sup> laity, to inquire for such a one.

Last of all, not in time, but as perfection is last, that care was ever had of me, with my earliest capacity, not to be negligently trained in the precepts of Christian religion: this that I have hitherto related, hath been to show that though Christianity had been but slightly taught me, yet a certain reservedness of natural disposition, and moral discipline learnt out of the noblest philosophy, was enough to keep me in disdain of far less incontinences than this of the bordello. But having had the doctrine of holy scripture unfolding those chaste and high mysteries, with timeliest care infused, that "the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body,"<sup>35</sup> thus also I argued to myself: that if unchastity in a woman, whom St. Paul terms the glory of man,<sup>36</sup> be such a scandal and dishonor, then certainly in a man, who is both the image and glory of God, it must, though commonly not so thought, be much more deflowering and dishonorable; in that he sins both against his own body, which is the perfecter sex,<sup>37</sup> and his own glory, which is in the woman, and, that which is worst, against the image and glory of God, which is in himself. Nor did I slumber over that place expressing such high rewards of ever accompanying the Lamb, with those celestial songs to others inapprehensible,

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<sup>34</sup> *Corinthians*, as a name for prostitutes, goes back to ancient times.

<sup>35</sup> "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body." (I Cor. vi, 13.)

<sup>36</sup> "... a man ... is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." (I Cor. xi, 7.)

<sup>37</sup> *the perfecter sex*: cf. Introduction #51.

but not to those who were not defiled with women,<sup>38</sup> which doubtless means fornication; for marriage must not be called a defilement.

Thus large I have purposely been, that if I have been justly taxed with this crime, it may come upon me, after all this my confession, with a tenfold shame.

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<sup>38</sup> Milton is thinking especially of the hymn to the Lamb of God which is sung at the "marriage of the Lamb," in Revelation xix, by the redeemed, to which he refers in *Lycidas*, 176-7, and again, much more significantly, in *Damon's Epitaph*, 215-9. For what he says here he has the authority of Calvin (*Institutes* IV, xii, 25; Norton's translation, p. 615): "The Apostle doth without exception boldly pronounce, that marriage is honourable among all men, but that for whoremongers, and adulterers abideth the judgment of God."

*A Selection from*  
THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE  
OF  
DIVORCE;\*

RESTORED TO THE GOOD OF BOTH SEXES, FROM THE BONDAGE  
OF CANON LAW, AND OTHER MISTAKES, TO THE TRUE  
MEANING OF SCRIPTURE IN THE LAW AND GOSPEL  
COMPARED.

WHEREIN ALSO ARE SET DOWN THE BAD CONSEQUENCES OF  
ABOLISHING, OR CONDEMNING AS SIN, THAT WHICH THE  
LAW OF GOD ALLOWS, AND CHRIST ABOLISHED NOT.

NOW THE SECOND TIME REVISED  
AND MUCH AUGMENTED,  
IN TWO BOOKS

TO THE PARLIAMENT OF ENGLAND WITH THE ASSEMBLY.

The Author J. M.

MATT. xiii. 52. "Every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a house, which bringeth out of his treasury things new and old."

PROV. xviii. 13. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

IF IT were seriously asked (and it would be no untimely question, renowned parliament, select assembly) who of all teachers and masters that have ever taught hath drawn the most disciples after him, both in religion and in manners, it might be not untruly answered, custom.<sup>1</sup> Though virtue be

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\* The tract is represented here only by the dedication, the preface, and chapters one to six in Book I, and by chapter one and the conclusion to chapter three in Book II.

<sup>1</sup> For the background of the following attack on custom, cf. Introduction #23 and 49.

commended for the most persuasive in her theory and conscience in the plain demonstration of the spirit finds most evincing, yet whether it be the secret of divine will or the original blindness<sup>2</sup> we are born in, so it happens for the most part that custom still is silently received for the best instructor. Except it be because her method is so glib and easy, in some manner like to that vision of Ezekiel<sup>3</sup> rolling up her sudden book of implicit<sup>4</sup> knowledge for him that will to take and swallow down at pleasure; which proving but of bad nourishment in the concoction,<sup>5</sup> as it was heedless in the devouring, puffs up unhealthily a certain big face of pretended learning mistaken among credulous men for the wholesome habit of soundness and good constitution, but is indeed no other than that swoln visage of counterfeit knowledge and literature, which not only in private mars our education, but also in public is the common climber into every chair where either religion is preached, or law reported; filling each estate of life and profession with abject and servile principles, depressing the high and heaven-born spirit of man far beneath the condition wherein either God created him, or sin hath sunk him.

To pursue the allegory, custom being but a mere face, as echo is a mere voice, rests not in her unaccomplishment until by secret inclination she accorporate herself with error, who being a blind and serpentine body without a head willingly accepts what he wants and supplies what her incompleteness went seeking. Hence it is that error supports custom, custom countenances error; and these two between them would perse-

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<sup>2</sup> *original blindness*: the spiritual blindness of man, to which, as Milton says below, sin—*i.e.* the original sin of Adam—"hath sunk him."

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel (iii, 1-3) describes the prophet as eating a roll at God's command and finding it in his mouth "as honey for sweetness." The roll symbolizes the prophet's message, and Milton's use of it here hardly harmonizes with its Biblical context. Cf. *Church Government*, note 112.

<sup>4</sup> By "implicit faith" in any human authority, Milton said in *Civil Power*, "the conscience also becomes implicit, and so by voluntary servitude to man's law, forfeits her Christian liberty."

<sup>5</sup> *concoction*: digestion. Cf. *Of Education*, note 102.

cute and chase away all truth and solid wisdom out of human life, were it not that God, rather than man, once in many ages calls together the prudent and religious counsels of men deputed to repress the encroachments and to work off the inveterate blots and obscurities wrought upon our minds by the subtle insinuating of error and custom; who, with the numerous and vulgar train of their followers, make it their chief design to envy and cry down the industry of free reasoning, under the terms of humor<sup>6</sup> and innovation; as if the womb of teeming truth were to be closed up if she presume to bring forth aught that sorts not with their unchewed notions and suppositions. Against which notorious injury and abuse of man's free soul, to testify and oppose the utmost that study and true labor can attain, heretofore the incitement of men reputed grave hath led me among others. And now the duty and the right of an instructed Christian calls me through the chance of good or evil report to be the sole advocate of a discountenanced truth: a high enterprise, lords and commons, a high enterprise and a hard, and such as every seventh son of a seventh son does not venture on.

Nor have I amidst the clamor of so much envy and impertinence whither to appeal, but to the concourse of so much piety and wisdom here assembled. Bringing in my hands an ancient and most necessary, most charitable and yet most injured, statute of Moses:<sup>7</sup> not repealed ever by him who only had the authority, but thrown aside with much inconsiderate neglect under the rubbish of canonical ignorance; as once the whole law was by some such like conveyance in Josiah's time.<sup>8</sup> And he who shall endeavor the amendment of any old neglected grievance in church or state, or in the daily course of life, if he be gifted with abilities of mind that may raise him to so high

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<sup>6</sup> *humor*: cf. "humor, faction, policy, or licentious will" in *Church Government*, I, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy xxiv, 1-2. Cf. Introduction #44.

<sup>8</sup> II Kings xxii and xxiii, tells the story of the discovery of the forgotten Mosaic scriptures and their restoration to a controlling place in the Temple worship in the reign of Josiah.

an undertaking, I grant he hath already much whereof not to repent him. Yet let me aread him not to be the foreman<sup>9</sup> of any misjudged opinion, unless his resolutions be firmly seated in a square and constant mind, not conscious to itself of any deserved blame and regardless of ungrounded suspicions. For this let him be sure, he shall be boarded<sup>10</sup> presently by the ruder sort, but not by discreet and well-nurtured men, with a thousand idle descants<sup>11</sup> and surmises. Who, when they cannot confute the least joint or sinew of any passage in the book, yet God forbid that truth should be truth because they have a boisterous conceit of some pretences in the writer. But were they not more busy and inquisitive than the apostle<sup>12</sup> commends, they would hear him at least, "rejoicing so the truth be preached, whether of envy or other pretence whatsoever." For truth is as impossible to be soiled by any outward touch as the sunbeam, though this ill hap wait on her nativity, that she never comes into the world but like a bastard, to the ignominy of him that brought her forth; till time, the midwife rather than the mother of truth,<sup>13</sup> have washed and salted the infant, declared her legitimate, and churched the father of his young Minerva<sup>14</sup> from the needless causes of his purgation.

Yourselves can best witness this, worthy patriots, and better will, no doubt hereafter. For who among ye of the foremost that have travailed in her behalf to the good of church or state, hath not been often traduced to be the agent of his own by-ends, under pretext of reformation? So much the more I shall not be unjust to hope that however infamy or envy

<sup>9</sup> *foreman*: spokesman, leading representative.

<sup>10</sup> *boarded*: accosted, assailed.

<sup>11</sup> *descants*: cf. the opening words of *Eikonoklastes*: "To descant on the misfortunes of a person fallen from . . . a dignity . . ."

<sup>12</sup> The apostle quoted is St. Paul, in Philippians i, 18.

<sup>13</sup> The popularity of the maxim that Truth is the daughter of Time is proved by its allegorical treatment in Renaissance painting and tapestry work.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the bold use in *P.L.* II, 757-8, of the myth that the goddess of wisdom was the offspring of Jupiter. Milton compares the "churching" or purification of women after childbirth in the Anglican Church to the treatment that he may expect as the father of his present brain child.

may work in other men to do her fretful will against this discourse, yet that the experience of your own uprightness misinterpreted will put ye in mind to give it free audience and generous construction. What though the brood of Belial,<sup>15</sup> the draff of men, to whom no liberty is pleasing but unbridled and vagabond lust without pale or partition, will laugh broad perhaps to see so great a strength of scripture mustering up in favor, as they suppose, of their debaucheries? They will know better when they shall hence learn that honest liberty is the greatest foe to dishonest licence.

And what though others out of a waterish and queasy conscience because ever crazy and never yet sound, will rail and fancy to themselves that injury and licence is the best of this book? Did not the distemper of their own stomachs affect them with a dizzy megrim, they would soon tie up their tongues and discern themselves like that Assyrian blasphemer,<sup>16</sup> all this while reproaching not man but the Almighty, the Holy One of Israel, whom they do not deny to have belawgiven his own sacred people with this very allowance which they now call injury and licence and dare cry shame on, and will do yet a while, till they get a little cordial sobriety to settle their qualming zeal. But this question concerns not us perhaps: indeed man's disposition though prone to search after vain curiosities, yet when points of difficulty are to be discussed appertaining to the removal of unreasonable wrong and burden from the perplexed life of our brother, it is incredible how cold, how dull and far from all fellow-feeling we are, without the spur of self-concernment.

Yet if the wisdom, the justice, the purity of God be to be cleared from foulest imputations which are not yet avoided; if charity be not to be degraded and trodden down under a civil ordinance; if matrimony be not to be advanced like that exalted

<sup>15</sup> Cf. "Belial, the dissolutes spirit that fell" (*P.R.* II, 150), and "the sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine." (*P.L.* I, 502.)

<sup>16</sup> The reply of the prophet Isaiah to the threats of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, before his unsuccessful attack on King Hezekiah, was: "Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? . . . even . . . the Holy One of Israel." (*II Kings* xix, 22.)

perdition written of to the Thessalonians, "above all that is called God,"<sup>17</sup> or goodness, nay, against them both; then I dare affirm there will be found in the contents of this book that which may concern us all. You it concerns chiefly, worthies in parliament, on whom, as on our deliverers, all our grievances and cares by the merit of your eminence and fortitude are devolved. Me it concerns next, having with much labor and faithful diligence first found out, or at least with a fearless and communicative candour first published, to the manifest good of Christendom that which, calling to witness everything mortal and immortal, I believe unfeignedly to be true. Let not other men think their conscience bound to search continually after truth, to pray for enlightening from above, to publish what they think they have so obtained, and debar me from conceiving myself tied by the same duties.

Ye have now, doubtless, by the favor and appointment of God, ye have now in your hands a great and populous nation to reform; from what corruption, what blindness in religion, ye know well; in what a degenerate and fallen spirit from the apprehension of native liberty and true manliness, I am sure ye find; with what unbounded licence rushing to whoredoms and adulteries, needs not long inquiry: insomuch that the fears which men have of too strict a discipline perhaps exceed the hopes that can be in others of ever introducing it with any great success. What if I should tell ye now of dispensations and indulgences, to give a little the reins, to let them play and nibble with the bait awhile; a people as hard of heart as that Egyptian colony<sup>18</sup> that went to Canaan. This is the common doctrine that adulterous and injurious divorces were not connived only, but with eye open allowed of old for hardness

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<sup>17</sup> The thought is that, by exalting any law above Christian charity, Parliament is in danger of fulfilling Paul's prophecy about "the son of perdition" who "exalteth himself above all that is called God." (II Thess. ii, 3-4.)

<sup>18</sup> The Egyptian colony is the Israelites, who often incurred the reproach of hardening their hearts from the fear of God (as in Isaiah lxiii, 17), and for whose "hardness of heart" Christ said (Mark x, 4) that "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement."



of heart. But that opinion, I trust, by then this following argument hath been well read, will be left for one of the mysteries of an indulgent Antichrist,<sup>19</sup> to farm out incest by, and those his other tributary pollutions. What middle way can be taken then, may some interrupt, if we must neither turn to the right nor to the left, and that the people hate to be reformed? Mark then, judges and lawgivers, and ye whose office it is to be our teachers, for I will utter now a doctrine, if ever any other, though neglected or not understood, yet of great and powerful importance to the governing of mankind. He who wisely would restrain the reasonable soul of man within due bounds, must first himself know perfectly how far the territory and dominion extends of just and honest liberty. As little must he offer to bind that which God hath loosened, as to loosen that which he hath bound. The ignorance and mistake of this high point hath heaped up one huge half of all the misery that hath been since Adam. In the gospel we shall read a supercilious crew of masters whose holiness, or rather whose evil eye, grieving that God should be so facile to man, was to set straiter limits to obedience than God hath set, to enslave the dignity of man, to put a garrison upon his neck of empty and over-dignified precepts: and we shall read our Saviour never more grieved and troubled<sup>20</sup> than to meet with such a peevish madness among men against their own freedom. How can we expect him to be less offended with us, when much of the same folly shall be found yet remaining where it least ought, to the perishing of thousands?

The greatest burden in the world is superstition, not only of ceremonies in the church but of imaginary and scarecrow sins at home. What greater weakening, what more subtle stragem against our Christian warfare,<sup>21</sup> when besides the gross

<sup>19</sup> In *Civil Power* Milton says that the violation of the principle of note 4 above is one reason why "Protestants account the Pope Antichrist." Throughout the present tract his attack on the restriction of divorce by the canon law takes advantage of the Protestant prejudice against "Antichrist."

<sup>20</sup> The twenty-third chapter of Matthew contains Christ's complaint against the Pharisees for hypocritically and cruelly increasing the burden of the Jewish ceremonial law.

<sup>21</sup> *Christian warfare*: cf. *Arcopagitica*, note 110.

body of real transgressions to encounter, we shall be terrified by a vain and shadowy menacing of faults that are not? When things indifferent shall be set to overfront us under the banners of sin, what wonder if we be routed, and by this art of our adversary, fall into the subjection of worst and deadliest offenses? The superstition of the papist is, "Touch not, taste not,"<sup>22</sup> when God bids both; and ours is, "Part not, separate not," when God and charity both permits and commands. "Let all your things be done with charity," saith St. Paul;<sup>23</sup> and his master saith, "She is the fulfilling of the law." Yet now a civil, an indifferent, a sometime dissuaded law of marriage, must be forced upon us to fulfil, not only without charity but against her. No place in heaven or earth, except hell, where charity may not enter: yet marriage, the ordinance of our solace and contentment, the remedy of our loneliness, will not admit now either of charity or mercy, to come in and mediate, or pacify the fierceness of this gentle ordinance, the unremedied loneliness of this remedy. Advise ye well, supreme senate, if charity be thus excluded and expulsed, how ye will defend the untainted honor of your own actions and proceedings.

He who marries, intends as little to conspire his own ruin as he that swears allegiance: and as a whole people is in proportion to an ill government, so is one man to an ill marriage. If they, against any authority, covenant, or statute, may by the sovereign edict of charity save not only their lives but honest liberties from unworthy bondage, as well may he against any private covenant, which he never entered to his mischief, redeem himself from unsupportable disturbances to honest peace and just contentment. And much the rather for that to resist the highest magistrate though tyrannizing, God never gave us express allowance,<sup>24</sup> only he gave us reason, charity,

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, note 71.

<sup>23</sup> The references are to I Corinthians xvi, 14, and Romans xiii, 10. In the latter St. Paul is quoting Christ. Cf. Introduction #45.

<sup>24</sup> In the background is St. Paul's development of the idea that Christians should "be subject to the higher powers." (Rom. xiii, 1-5.)

nature and good example to bear us out; but in this economical misfortune thus to demean ourselves, besides the warrant of those four great directors, which doth as justly belong hither, we have an express law of God, and such a law, as whereof our Saviour with a solemn threat forbade the abrogating.<sup>25</sup> For no effect of tyranny can sit more heavy on the commonwealth than this household unhappiness on the family. And farewell all hope of true reformation in the state, while such an evil as this lies undiscerned or unregarded in the house: on the redress whereof depends not only the spiritfule and orderly life of our grown men, but the willing and careful education of our children.

Let this therefore be new examined, this tenure and freehold of mankind, this native and domestic charter given us by a greater lord than that Saxon king the Confessor.<sup>26</sup> Let the statutes of God be turned over, be scanned anew, and considered not altogether by the narrow intellectuals of quotationists and common places, but (as was the ancient right of councils)<sup>27</sup> by men of what liberal profession soever, of eminent spirit and breeding, joined with a diffuse and various knowledge of divine and human things; able to balance and define good and evil, right and wrong, throughout every state of life; able to show us the ways of the Lord straight and faithful as they are, not full of cranks and contradictions and pitfalling dispenses, but with divine insight and benignity measured out to the proportion of each mind and spirit, each temper and disposition, created so different each from other, and yet by the skill of wise conducting, all to become uniform in virtue.

To expedite these knots were worthy a learned and memorable synod; while our enemies expect to see the expectation of

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<sup>25</sup> Teaching the disciples that their "righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the . . . Pharisees," Christ solemnly warned against breaking even the "least commandments" of the Mosaic law. (Matt. v, 19-20.)

<sup>26</sup> After recounting the death of King Edward the Confessor in 1066, Milton ended his chapter in the *History of Britain* by observing that, "His laws, held good and just, and long after desired by the English of their Norman kings, are yet extant."

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, note 179.

the church tired out with dependencies and independencies, how they will compound and in what calends.<sup>28</sup> Doubt not, worthy senators, to vindicate the sacred honor and judgment of Moses your predecessor, from the shallow commenting of scholastics and canonists. Doubt not after him to reach out your steady hands to the misinformed and wearied life of man, to restore this his lost heritage into the household state. Wherewith be sure that peace and love, the best subsistence of a Christian family, will return home from whence they are now banished; places of prostitution will be less haunted, the neighbor's bed less attempted, the yoke of prudent and manly discipline will be generally submitted to; sober and well-ordered living will soon spring up in the commonwealth.

Ye have an author great beyond exception, Moses; and one yet greater, he who hedged in from abolishing every smallest jot and tittle of precious equity contained in that law, with a more accurate and lasting Masoreth,<sup>29</sup> than either the synagogue of Ezra<sup>30</sup> or the Galilæan school at Tiberias<sup>31</sup> hath left us. Whatever else ye can enact, will scarce concern a third part of the British name: but the benefit and good of this your magnanimous example, will easily spread far beyond the banks of Tweed and the Norman isles.<sup>32</sup> It would not be the first or second time, since our ancient druids,<sup>33</sup> by whom this island was the cathedral of philosophy to France, left off their pagan rights, that England hath had this honor vouchsafed from

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<sup>28</sup> *calends*: date. In Latin the word meant the first day of every month.

<sup>29</sup> *Masoreth*: the body of critical notes on the Old Testament compiled by Hebrew scholars in the tenth century and earlier. "Milton (misled by the rendering 'tradition') seems to have supposed the word applicable to the exegetical traditions of the Rabbis, by which the severity of the law was increased." (*N.E.D.*)

<sup>30</sup> After the return of the Jews from captivity in Babylon, under Ezra, synagogue worship grew up in the Palestinian cities beside the re-established temple worship in Jerusalem.

<sup>31</sup> From the third to the twelfth century Tiberias was a leading seat of Jewish culture. It was the last city in which a Sanhedrin held sittings. The collection of the Mishnah began there and the Talmud was edited there.

<sup>32</sup> The Norman isles are Jersey, Guernsey, and the other Channel Islands.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Milton's pride in the ancient culture of the druids in *Manso*, 42-8.

heaven, to give out reformation to the world. Who was it but our English Constantine<sup>34</sup> that baptized the Roman empire? Who, but the Northumbrian Willibrode,<sup>35</sup> and Winifride of Devon,<sup>36</sup> with their followers, were the first apostles of Germany? Who but Alcuin<sup>37</sup> and Wickliff<sup>38</sup> our countrymen, opened the eyes of Europe, the one in arts, the other in religion? Let not England forget her precedence of teaching nations how to live.

Know, worthies, know and exercise the privilege of your honored country. A greater title I here bring ye than is either in the power or in the policy of Rome to give her monarchs. This glorious act will style ye the defenders of charity. Nor is this yet the highest inscription that will adorn so religious and so holy a defence as this. Behold here the pure and sacred law of God and his yet purer and more sacred name, offering themselves to you, first of all, Christian reformers, to be acquitted from the long-suffered ungodly attribute of patronizing adultery. Defer not to wipe off instantly these imputative blurs and stains cast by rude fancies upon the throne and beauty itself of inviolable holiness, lest some other people more devout and wise than we bereave us this offered immortal glory, our

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<sup>34</sup>In 312 the Emperor Constantine declared the Roman Empire officially Christian for the first time. "There goes a fame, and that seconded by most of our own historians, though not those the ancientest," says Milton in *The History of Britain* (C.E. X, 92), "that Constantine was born in this island."

<sup>35</sup>Willibrode (657?-738?), an Englishman who was educated in Ireland, was an aggressive missionary in Frisia and, with the support of Pippin and Charles Martel did much to civilize the Germans. When he died, he was Archbishop of Utrecht.

<sup>36</sup>Winifride, better known as St. Boniface (680-755), succeeded Willibrode in his bishopric after an adventurous missionary career in Bavaria and other parts of Germany. After some dramatic successes in discrediting the worship of Wotan, he finally suffered martyrdom in Frisia.

<sup>37</sup>Alcuin (735-804) carried English learning to the court of Charlemagne. As head of the abbeys of Ferrières and Saint Loup, and later at Tours, he founded important schools, developed the art of illuminating manuscripts, wrote several influential theological works, and revised the text of the Latin Bible.

<sup>38</sup>John Wycliffe (1324?-1384) was generally regarded by the Puritans as the precursor of the English Reformation. Cf. C.G., note 88.

wonted prerogative, of being the first asserters in every great vindication.

For me, as far as my part leads me, I have already my greatest gain, assurance and inward satisfaction to have done in this nothing unworthy of an honest life, and studies well employed. With what event, among the wise and right understanding handful of men, I am secure. But how among the drove of custom and prejudice this will be relished by such whose capacity, since their youth run ahead into the easy creek of a system or a medulla,<sup>39</sup> sails there at will under the blown physiognomy of their unlabored rudiments; for them, what their taste will be, I have also surety sufficient, from the entire league that hath been ever between formal ignorance and grave obstinacy. Yet when I remember the little that our Saviour could prevail about this doctrine of charity against the crabbed textuists of his time, I make no wonder, but rest confident that whoso prefers either matrimony or other ordinance before the good of man and the plain exigence of charity, let him profess papist, or protestant, or what he will, he is no better than a pharisee, and understands not the gospel: whom as a misinterpreter of Christ I openly protest against; and provoke him to the trial of this truth before all the world. And let him bethink him withal how he will solder up the shifting flaws of his ungirt permissions, his venial and unvenial dispenses,<sup>40</sup> wherewith the law of God pardoning and unpardoning hath been shamefully branded for want of heed in glossing, to have eluded and baffled out all faith and chastity from the marriage-bed of that holy seed, with politic and judicial adulteries.

I seek not to seduce the simple and illiterate. My errand is to find out the choicest and the learnedest who have this high gift of wisdom to answer solidly, or to be convinced. I crave it from the piety, the learning, and the prudence which is

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<sup>39</sup> *medulla*: marrow. The word was a favorite in Latin titles such as Ames's *Medulla Theologiae* or *Marrow of Theology*. Cf. Introduction #100.

<sup>40</sup> *dispenses*: dispensations; in this case, dispensations granted for either venial sins, such as the Catholic Church regarded as capable of forgiveness, or for those so serious as not to be venial.

housed in this place. It might perhaps more fitly have been written in another tongue: and I had done so, but that the esteem I have of my country's judgment, and the love I bear to my native language to serve it first with what I endeavor, make me speak it thus, ere I assay the verdict of outlandish readers. And perhaps also here I might have ended nameless, but that the address of these lines chiefly to the parliament of England might have seemed ingrateful not to acknowledge by whose religious care, unwearied watchfulness, courageous and heroic resolutions, I enjoy the peace and studious leisure to remain,

The Honorer and Attendant of their  
Noble worth and virtues,

JOHN MILTON.

## THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE OF DIVORCE; RESTORED TO THE GOOD OF BOTH SEXES.

### BOOK I.

#### THE PREFACE.

*That Man is the occasion of his own miseries in most of those evils which he imputes to God's inflicting. The absurdity of our canonists in their decrees about divorce. The Christian imperial Laws framed with more Equity. The opinion of Hugo Grotius and Paulus Fagius: And the purpose in general of this Discourse.*

MANY men, whether it be their fate or fond opinion, easily persuade themselves, if God would but be pleased a while to withdraw his just punishments from us and to restrain what power either the devil or any earthly enemy hath to work us woe, that then man's nature would find immediate rest and releasement from all evils. But verily they who think so, if they be such as have a mind large enough to take into their thoughts a general survey of human things, would soon prove themselves in that opinion far deceived. For though it were

granted us by divine indulgence to be exempt from all that can be harmful to us from without, yet the perverseness of our folly is so bent that we should never lin<sup>1</sup> hammering out of our own hearts, as it were out of a flint, the seeds and sparkles of new misery to ourselves, till all were in a blaze again.

And no marvel if out of our own hearts, for they are evil; but even out of those things which God meant us either for a principal good or a pure contentment, we are still hatching and contriving upon ourselves matter of continual sorrow and perplexity. What greater good to man than that revealed rule whereby God vouchsafes to show us how he would be worshipped? And yet that not rightly understood became the cause that once a famous man in Israel<sup>2</sup> could not but oblige his conscience to be the sacrificer, or if not, the gaoler of his innocent and only daughter; and was the cause oftentimes that armies of valiant men have given up their throats to a heathenish enemy on the sabbath day,<sup>3</sup> fondly thinking their defensive resistance to be as then a work unlawful.

What thing more instituted to the solace and delight of man than marriage? And yet the misinterpreting of some scripture, directed mainly against the abusers of the law for divorce given by Moses, hath changed the blessing of matrimony not seldom into a familiar and co-inhabiting mischief, at least into a drooping and disconsolate household captivity, without refuge or redemption—so ungoverned and so wild a race doth superstition run us, from one extreme of abused liberty into the other of unmerciful restraint. For although God in the first ordaining of marriage taught us to what end he did it, in words expressly implying the apt and cheerful conversation of man

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<sup>1</sup> *lin*: stop.

<sup>2</sup> Jephthah's needless vow to sacrifice whatever first greeted him on his return home from victory over the Ammonites, led to the offering of his daughter. (Judg. xi, 29-40.)

<sup>3</sup> Milton perhaps had in mind Josephus' statement in the first book of the *Wars of the Jews* that "the labors of the Romans would have been endless had not Pompey taken advantage of the seventh day of the week, on which the Jews refrain from all manual work. At the very hour when the temple was taken, when they were being massacred about the altar, they never desisted from the religious rites of the day."



with woman, to comfort and refresh him against the evil of solitary life, not mentioning the purpose of generation till afterwards, as being but a secondary end in dignity, though not in necessity: yet now, if any two be but once handed in the church, and have tasted in any sort the nuptial bed, let them find themselves never so mistaken in their dispositions through any error, concealment, or misadventure, that through their different tempers, thoughts and constitutions, they can neither be to one another a remedy against loneliness nor live in any union or contentment all their days; yet they shall, so they be but found suitably weaponed to the least possibility of sensual enjoyment, be made, spite of antipathy, to fadge together and combine as they may to their unspeakable wearisomeness and despair of all sociable delight in the ordinance which God established to that very end.

What a calamity is this, and, as the wise man, if he were alive, would sigh out in his own phrase, what a "sore evil is this under the sun!"<sup>4</sup> All which we can refer justly to no other author than the canon law and her adherents, not consulting with charity, the interpreter and guide of our faith, but resting in the mere element of the text—doubtless by the policy of the devil to make that gracious ordinance become unsupportable, that what with men not daring to venture upon wedlock, and what with men wearied out of it, all inordinate licence might abound.

It was for many ages that marriage lay in disgrace with most of the ancient doctors, as a work of the flesh, almost a defilement, wholly denied to priests, and the second time dissuaded to all, as he that reads Tertullian or Jerome<sup>5</sup> may see at large.

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<sup>4</sup> In Ecclesiastes v, 13 and 16, and elsewhere, the phrase "a sore evil under the sun" is used. Ecclesiastes was attributed to Solomon, to whom God gave "an understanding heart" (I Kings, iii, 12), so that he never had an equal in wisdom.

<sup>5</sup> In works like *On Monogamy* and *On Pudicity* Tertullian (155?-222?) and Jerome in his *Book against Jovinian* treated the ideal of monogamous marriage as inferior to that of strict chastity. Chaucer coupled their names as Milton does here when he made the Wife of Bath mention in her *Prologue*, ll. 674-6,

Afterwards it was thought so sacramental that no adultery or desertion could dissolve it, and this is the sense of our canon courts in England to this day, but in no other reformed church else. Yet there remains in them also a burden on it as heavy as the other two were disgraceful or superstitious, and of as much iniquity, crossing a law not only written by Moses, but charactered in us by nature, of more antiquity and deeper ground than marriage itself; which law is to force nothing against the faultless proprieties of nature.<sup>6</sup> Yet that this may be colorably done, our Saviour's words touching divorce are as it were congealed into a stony rigor, inconsistent both with his doctrine and his office, and that which he preached only to the conscience is by canonical tyranny snatched into the compulsive censure of a judicial court, where laws are imposed even against the venerable and secret power of nature's impression, to love, whatever cause be found to loathe: which is a heinous barbarism both against the honor of marriage, the dignity of man and his soul, the goodness of Christianity and all the human respects of civility. Notwithstanding that some the wisest and gravest among the Christian emperors,<sup>7</sup> who had about them, to consult with, those of the fathers then living, who for their learning and holiness of life are still with us in great renown, have made their statutes and edicts concerning this debate far more easy and relenting in many necessary cases wherein the canon is inflexible. And Hugo Grotius, a man of these times, one of the best learned, seems not obscurely to adhere in his persuasion to the equity of those imperial decrees, in his notes upon the Evangelists; much allay-

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A cardinal that highte Scint Jerome,  
That made a book agayn Jovinian;  
In which book eek ther was Tertulan

as items in Clerk Jankyn's volume of misogynistic literature.

<sup>6</sup> For the influence of Selden's study of "the law of nature and nations" upon Milton's thought see Eivion Owen, "Milton and Selden on Divorce," in *S.P.* XLIII (1946), 233-257. Cf. Introduction #42.

<sup>7</sup> For Grotius' reasons for regarding the Code of Justinian and the laws of the Christian emperors generally as better than the Canon Law, cf. Introduction #44. For the influence of his New Testament commentary on Milton, cf. #42.

ing the outward roughness of the text, which hath for the most part been too immoderately expounded; and excites the diligence of others to inquire further into this question, as containing many points that have not yet been explained. Which ever likely to remain intricate and hopeless upon the suppositions commonly stuck to, the authority of Paulus Fagius,<sup>8</sup> one so learned and so eminent in England once, if it might persuade, would straight acquaint us with a solution of these differences no less prudent than compendious. He, in his comment on the Pentateuch, doubted not to maintain that divorces might be as lawfully permitted by the magistrate to Christians as they were to the Jews.

But because he is but brief, and these things of great consequence not to be kept obscure, I shall conceive it nothing above my duty, either for the difficulty or the censure that may pass thereon, to communicate such thoughts as I also have had, and do offer them now in this general labor of reformation to the candid view both of church and magistrate: especially because I see it the hope of good men that those irregular and unspiritual courts have spun their utmost date in this land, and some better course must now be constituted. This therefore shall be the task and period of this discourse to prove, first, that other reasons of divorce besides adultery were by the law of Moses, and are yet to be allowed by the Christian magistrate as a piece of justice, and that the words of Christ are not hereby contraried. Next, that to prohibit absolutely any divorce whatsoever, except those which Moses excepted, is against the reason of law, as in due place I shall show out of Fagius, with many additions. He therefore who by adventuring shall be so happy as with success to light the way of such an expedient liberty and truth as this, shall restore the much-wronged and over-sorrowed state of matrimony, not only to those merciful and

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<sup>8</sup>The eminent German reformer and Biblical scholar, Paulus Fagius (1504-1549), left his Strassbourg pastorate with Martin Bucer to accompany him to England and become professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, but died there within a few months. The dishonor done to his body and to Bucer's in Mary's reign and their splendid reinterment in Elizabeth's reign made them martyrs of the Protestant cause.

life-giving remedies of Moses, but, as much as may be, to that serene and blissful condition it was in at the beginning, and shall deserve of all apprehensive men (considering the troubles and distempers, which, for want of this in sight, have been so oft in kingdoms, in states, and families) shall deserve to be reckoned among the public benefactors of civil and human life, above the inventors of wine and oil; for this is a far dearer, far nobler and more desirable cherishing to man's life, unworthily exposed to sadness and mistake, which he shall vindicate.

Not that licence and levity and unconsented breach of faith should herein be countenanced, but that some conscionable and tender pity might be had of those who have unwarily, in a thing they never practised before, made themselves the bondmen of a luckless and helpless matrimony. In which argument, he whose courage can serve him to give the first onset, must look for two several oppositions: the one from those who having sworn themselves to long custom and the letter of the text, will not out of the road; the other from those whose gross and vulgar apprehensions conceit but low of matrimonial purposes, and in the work of male and female think they have all. Nevertheless, it shall be here sought by due ways to be made appear that those words of God in the institution, promising a meet help against loneliness,<sup>9</sup> and those words of Christ, that "his yoke is easy, and his burden light,"<sup>10</sup> were not spoken in vain: for if the knot of marriage may in no case be dissolved but for adultery, all the burdens and services of the law are not so intolerable.

This only is desired of them who are minded to judge hardly of thus maintaining, that they would be still and hear all out, nor think it equal to answer deliberate reason with sudden heat and noise; remembering this, that many truths now of reverend esteem and credit, had their birth and beginning once from singular and private thoughts, while the most of men were otherwise possessed; and had the fate at first to be gen-

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<sup>9</sup> "And God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make an helpmeet for him." (Gen. ii, 18.)

<sup>10</sup> Matthew xi, 30.

erally exploded and exclaimed on by many violent opposers. Yet I may err perhaps in soothing myself that this present truth revived will deserve on all hands to be not sinisterly received, in that it undertakes the cure of an inveterate disease crept into the best part of human society; and to do this with no smarting corrosive, but with a smooth and pleasing lesson, which received, hath the virtue to soften and dispel rooted and knotty sorrows; and without enchantment, if that be feared, or spell<sup>11</sup> used, hath regard at once both to serious pity and upright honesty; that tends to the redeeming and restoring of none but such as are the object of compassion, having in an ill hour hampered themselves to the utter dispatch of all their most beloved comforts and repose for this life's term.

But if we shall obstinately dislike this new overture of unexpected ease and recovery, what remains but to deplore the frowardness of our hopeless condition, which neither can endure the estate we are in, nor admit of remedy either sharp or sweet? Sharp we ourselves distaste; and sweet, under whose hands we are, is scrupled and suspected as too luscious. In such a posture Christ found the Jews, who were neither won with the austerity of John the Baptist,<sup>12</sup> and thought it too much licence to follow freely the charming pipe of him who sounded and proclaimed liberty and relief to all distresses: yet truth in some age or other will find her witness, and shall be justified at last by her own children.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "Where persuasions and other remedies" for holding love proved ineffective, Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* III, ii, 5, 4, reported many flying "to unlawful means, Philters, Amulets, Magick Spells, Ligatures, Characters, Charms."

<sup>12</sup> Milton fused the story of Jesus' answer to those who objected that "the disciples of John . . . used to fast," while his did not, with his comparison of himself to a child piping to other children who will not dance, and with his description of himself as preaching "deliverance to captives, . . . and to set at liberty them that are bruised." (Mark ii, 18; Matt. xi, 17; and Luke iv, 18.)

<sup>13</sup> "The Son of man is come eating and drinking: and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

"But wisdom is justified of her children." (Luke vii, 34-5.)

## CHAPTER I.

*The Position, proved by the Law of Moses. That Law expounded and asserted to a moral and charitable use, first by Paulus Fagius, next with other additions.*

TO REMOVE therefore, if it be possible, this great and sad oppression which through the strictness of a literal interpreting hath invaded and disturbed the dearest and most peaceable estate of household society, to the overburdening, if not the overwhelming of many Christians better worth than to be so deserted of the church's considerate care, this position shall be laid down, first proving, then answering what may be objected either from scripture or light of reason.

"That indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering and ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace, is a greater reason of divorce than natural frigidity, especially if there be no children, and that there be mutual consent."

This I gather from the law in Deut. xxiv. 1: "When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house," &c. This law, if the words of Christ may be admitted into our belief, shall never, while the world stands, for him be abrogated. First therefore I here set down what learned Fagius<sup>1</sup> hath observed on this law: "The law of God," saith he, "permitted divorce for the help of human weakness. For every one that of necessity separates, cannot live single. That Christ denied divorce to his own, hinders not; for what is that to the unregenerate, who hath not attained such perfection? Let not the remedy be despised, which was given to weakness. And when Christ saith, who marries the divorced commits adultery, it is to be understood if he had any plot in the divorce." The rest

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<sup>1</sup> Fagius: cf. the Preface, note 8.

I reserve until it be disputed, how the magistrate is to do herein. From hence we may plainly discern a twofold consideration in this law: first, the end of the lawgiver and the proper act of the law, to command or to allow something just and honest, or indifferent. Secondly, his sufferance from some accidental result of evil by this allowance, which the law cannot remedy. For if this law have no other end or act but only the allowance of a sin, though never to so good intention, that law is no law, but sin muffled in the robe of law, or law disguised in the loose garment of sin. Both which are too foul hypotheses to save the phenomenon of our Saviour's answer to the pharisees about this matter.<sup>2</sup> And I trust anon, by the help of an infallible guide, to perfect such Prutenic<sup>3</sup> tables as shall mend the astronomy of our wide expositors.

The cause of divorce mentioned in the law is translated "some uncleanness," but in the Hebrew it sounds "nakedness of aught, or any real nakedness," which by all the learned interpreters is referred to the mind as well as to the body. And what greater nakedness or unfitness of mind than that which hinders ever the solace and peaceful society of the married couple? And what hinders that more than the unfitness and defectiveness of an unconjugal mind? The cause therefore of divorce expressed in the position cannot but agree with that described in the best and equallest sense of Moses's law. Which, being a matter of pure charity, is plainly moral, and more now in force than ever, therefore surely lawful. For if under the law such was God's gracious indulgence as not to suffer the ordinance of his goodness and favor through any error to be seared and stigmatized upon his servants to their misery and thralldom, much less will he suffer it now under the covenant of grace, by abrogating his former grant of remedy

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<sup>2</sup> Christ's answer to the Pharisees when they "came tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" is in Matthew xix, 3-9. Cf. Matthew v, 31, and Introduction #44.

<sup>3</sup> The Copernican planetary tables, which were named Prutenic, or the Prutenics, in honor of Albert, Duke of Prussia, were published by Erasmus Reinhold in 1551.

and relief. But the first institution will be objected to have ordained marriage inseparable. To that a little patience until this first part have amply discoursed the grave and pious reasons of this divorcive law; and then I doubt not but with one gentle stroking to wipe away ten thousand tears out of the life of man. Yet thus much I shall now insist on, that whatever the institution were, it could not be so enormous, nor so rebellious against both nature and reason as to exalt itself above the end and person for whom it was instituted.

## CHAPTER II.

*The first reason of this Law grounded on the prime Reason of matrimony. That no covenant whatsoever obliges against the main End both of itself, and of the parties covenanting.*

FOR ALL sense and equity reclaims that any law or covenant, how solemn or strait soever, either between God and man, or man and man, though of God's joining, should bind against a prime and principal scope of its own institution, and of both or either party covenanting; neither can it be of force to engage a blameless creature to his own perpetual sorrow, mistaken for his expected solace, without suffering charity to step in and do a confessed good work of parting those whom nothing holds together but this of God's joining, falsely supposed against the express end of his own ordinance. And what his chief end was of creating woman to be joined with man, his own instituting words declare, and are infallible to inform us what is marriage and what is no marriage, unless we can think them set there to no purpose: "It is not good," saith he, "that man should be alone. I will make him a helpmeet for him."<sup>1</sup> From which words so plain, less cannot be concluded, nor is by any learned interpreter, than that in God's intention a meet and happy conversation is the chiefest and the noblest end of mar-

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis ii, 18.



riage,<sup>2</sup> for we find here no expression so necessarily implying carnal knowledge as this prevention of loneliness to the mind and spirit of man. To this, Fagius, Calvin, Pareus,<sup>3</sup> Rivetus,<sup>4</sup> as willingly and largely assent as can be wished. And indeed it is a greater blessing from God, more worthy so excellent a creature as man is, and a higher end to honor and sanctify the league of marriage, whenas the solace and satisfaction of the mind is regarded and provided for before the sensitive pleasing of the body. And with all generous persons married thus it is that where the mind and person pleases aptly, there some unaccomplishment of the body's delight may be better borne with, than when the mind hangs off in an unclosing disproportion, though the body be as it ought; for there all corporal delight will soon become unsavoury and contemptible. And the solitariness of man, which God had namely and principally ordered to prevent by marriage, hath no remedy, but lies under a worse condition than the loneliest single life: for in single life the absence and remoteness of a helper might inure him to expect his own comforts out of himself, or to seek with hope; but here the continual sight of his deluded thoughts, without cure, must needs be to him, if especially his complexion incline him to melancholy, a daily trouble and pain of loss, in some degree like that which reprobates<sup>5</sup> feel. Lest therefore so noble a creature as man should be shut up incurably under a worse evil by an easy mistake in that ordinance which God gave him to remedy a less evil, reaping to himself sorrow while he went to rid away soli-

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Owen Feltham in "Of Marriage and Single Life:" "Questionless, a *Woman* with a *wise soul*, is the fittest Companion for *Man*: otherwise *God* would have given him a *Friend* rather than a *Wife*. A *wise Wife* comprehends both sexes; she is *Woman* for her *Body*, and she is man within; for her soul is like her *Husbands*." (*Resolves*, First Century, LXXXV.)

<sup>3</sup> For Pareus cf. *C.G.*, note 112. In the Second Book of *Divorce* Milton quotes his Biblical commentary frequently.

<sup>4</sup> Rivetus, as André Rivet (1572-1651) Latinized his name, was a leading French theologian. He was professor of theology at Leyden 1620-1626, and published his great *Isagoge or Introduction to the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments* there in 1617. In 1621 Oxford made him a D.D.

<sup>5</sup> *reprobates*: persons without hope of salvation. Cf. Introduction #101.

tariness, it cannot avoid to be concluded that if the woman be naturally so of disposition as will not help to remove, but help to increase that same Godforbidden loneliness (which will in time draw on with it a general discomfort and dejection of mind not befitting either Christian profession or moral conversation,<sup>6</sup> unprofitable and dangerous to the commonwealth, when the household estate, out of which must flourish forth the vigor and spirit of all public enterprises, is so ill-contented and procured at home, and cannot be supported), such a marriage can be no marriage, whereto the most honest end is wanting; and the aggrieved person shall do more manly to be extraordinary and singular in claiming the due right whereof he is frustrated, than to piece up his lost contentment by visiting the stews, or stepping to his neighbor's bed, which is the common shift in this misfortune; or else by suffering his useful life to waste away and be lost under a secret affliction of an unconscionable size to human strength. Against all which evils the mercy of this Mosaic law was graciously exhibited.

### CHAPTER III.

*The ignorance and iniquity of Canon-law providing for the right of the body in marriage, but nothing for the wrongs and grievances of the mind. An objection, that the mind should be better looked to before contract, answered.*

How vain, therefore, is it, and how preposterous in the canon law,<sup>1</sup> to have made such careful provision against the impediment of carnal performance, and to have had no care about the unconvincing inability of mind so defective to the purest and most sacred end of matrimony; and that the vessel of voluptuous enjoyment must be made good to him that has taken it upon trust, without any caution, whenas the mind,

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<sup>6</sup> *conversation*: relations and conduct generally.

<sup>1</sup> Milton calls the code which the ecclesiastical courts of the English bishops had enforced Canon Law because it was little altered from the traditional Canon Law of the Catholic Church. Cf. Introduction #40.

from whence must flow the acts of peace and love—a far more precious mixture than the quintessence of an excrement—though it be found never so deficient and unable to perform the best duty of marriage in a cheerful and agreeable conversation, shall be thought good enough, however flat and melancholious it be, and must serve, though to the eternal disturbance and languishing of him that complains him. Yet wisdom and charity, weighing God's own institution, would think that the pining of a sad spirit wedded to loneliness should deserve to be freed, as well as the impatience of a sensual desire so providently relieved. 'Tis read to us in the liturgy that "we must not marry to satisfy the fleshly appetite, like brute beasts that have no understanding;"<sup>2</sup> but the canon so runs as if it dreamed of no other matter than such an appetite to be satisfied; for if it happen that nature hath stopped or extinguished the veins of sensuality, that marriage is annulled. But though all the faculties of the understanding and conversing part after trial appear to be so ill and so aversely met through nature's unalterable working as that neither peace nor any sociable contentment can follow, 'tis as nothing—the contract shall stand as firm as ever, betide what will. What is this but secretly to instruct us that however many grave reasons are pretended to the married life, yet that nothing indeed is thought worth regard therein, but the prescribed satisfaction of an irrational heat? Which cannot be but ignominious to the state of marriage, dishonorable to the undervalued soul of man and even to Christian doctrine itself: while it seems more moved at the disappointing of an impetuous nerve than at the ingenuous grievance of a mind unreasonably yoked, and to place more of marriage in the channel of concupiscence than in the pure influence of peace and love, whereof the soul's lawful contentment is the only fountain.

But some are ready to object that the disposition ought seriously to be considered before. But let them know again that for all the wariness can be used, it may yet befall a discreet

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<sup>2</sup> From the marriage service of the Anglican Liturgy.

man to be mistaken in his choice, and we have plenty of examples. The soberest and best governed men are least practised in these affairs; and who knows not that the bashful muteness of a virgin may oftentimes hide all the unliveliness and natural sloth which is really unfit for conversation? Nor is there that freedom of access granted or presumed as may suffice to a perfect discerning till too late; and where any indisposition is suspected, what more usual than the persuasion of friends that acquaintance, as it increases, will amend all? And lastly, it is not strange though many who have spent their youth chastely, are in some things not so quick-sighted, while they haste too eagerly to light the nuptial torch,<sup>3</sup> nor is it, therefore, that for a modest error a man should forfeit so great a happiness, and no charitable means to release him, since they who have lived most loosely, by reason of their bold accustoming prove most successful in their matches, because their wild affections, unsettling at will, have been as so many divorces to teach them experience. Whenas the sober man honoring the appearance of modesty, and hoping well of every social virtue under that veil, may easily chance to meet, if not with a body impenetrable, yet often with a mind to all other due conversation inaccessible, and to all the more estimable and superior purposes of matrimony useless and almost lifeless; and what a solace, what a fit help such a consort would be through the whole life of a man, is less pain to conjecture than to have experience.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. the allusion to the pagan lighting of the nuptial torch in *P.L.* XI, 590.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The second Reason of this Law, because without it marriage, as it happens oft, is not a remedy of that which it promises, as any rational creature would expect. That marriage, if we pattern from the beginning, as our Saviour bids, was not properly the remedy of lust, but the fulfilling of conjugal love and helpfulness.*

AND THAT we may further see what a violent and cruel thing it is to force the continuing of those together whom God and nature in the gentlest end of marriage never joined, divers evils and extremities that follow upon such a compulsion shall here be set in view. Of evils, the first and greatest is that hereby a most absurd and rash imputation is fixed upon God and his holy laws, of conniving and dispensing with open and common adultery among his chosen people—a thing which the rankest<sup>1</sup> politician would think it shame and disworship that his laws should countenance. How and in what manner this comes to pass I shall reserve till the course of method brings on the unfolding of many scriptures. Next, the law and gospel are hereby made liable to more than one contradiction, which I refer also thither. Lastly, the supreme dictate of charity<sup>2</sup> is hereby many ways neglected and violated; which I shall forthwith address to prove. First, we know St. Paul saith, "It is better to marry than to burn."<sup>3</sup> Marriage, therefore, was given as a remedy of that trouble: but what might this burning mean? Certainly not the mere motion of carnal lust, not the

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<sup>1</sup> *rankest politician*: "Wonderfull!" says *An Answer to a Booke intituled The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (p. 17), "What a Boarish Adjective you joyne with a Politician. Politician is a title worthie of honour and respect, and why you should disgrace it with this homelie language, I cannot imagine; except it be, because Politicians ordinarily differ from you in their opinion." To this Milton replied in *Colasterion*: "It offends him, that 'rankest' should signify aught but his own smell. . . . Next, the word 'politician' is not used to his maw; and thereupon he plays the most notorious hobby-horse, jesting and frisking in the luxury of his nonsense with such poor fetches to cog a laughter from us, that no antic hobnail at a morris, but is more handsomely facetious." (C.E. IV, 257.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Introduction #43.

<sup>3</sup> I Corinthians vii, 9.

mere goad of a sensitive desire: God does not principally take care for such cattle. What is it then but that desire which God put into Adam in Paradise, before he knew the sin of incontinence—that desire which God saw it was not good that man should be left alone to burn in—the desire and longing to put off an unkindly solitariness by uniting another body, but not without a fit soul, to his in the cheerful society of wedlock? Which if it were so needful before the fall, when man was much more perfect in himself, how much more is it needful now against all the sorrows and casualties of this life, to have an intimate and speaking help, a ready and reviving associate in marriage? Whereof who misses by chancing on a mute and spiritless mate, remains more alone than before, and in a burning less to be contained than that which is fleshly, and more to be considered as being more deeply rooted even in the faultless innocence of nature. As for that other burning, which is but as it were the venom of a lusty and over-abounding concoction, strict life and labor with the abatement of a full diet, may keep that low and obedient enough; but this pure and more inbred desire of joining to itself in conjugal fellowship a fit conversing soul (which desire is properly called love) “is stronger than death,” as the spouse of Christ thought, “many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it.”<sup>4</sup> This is that rational burning that marriage is to remedy, not to be allayed with fasting, nor with any penance to be subdued: which how can he assuage who by mishap hath met the most unmeetest and unsuitable mind? Who hath the power to struggle with an intelligible flame, not in Paradise to be resisted, become now more ardent by being failed of what in reason it looked for; and even then most unquenched when the importunity of a provender burning is well enough appeased, and yet the soul hath obtained nothing of what it justly desires. Certainly such a one forbidden to divorce is in effect forbidden to marry, and compelled to greater difficulties than in a single

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<sup>4</sup> Like Pareus in his commentary on the Song of Solomon, Milton interprets the lover who sings as Christ and his beloved as the Church. Cf. C.G., note 131. The reference here is to chapter viii, 7.

life; for if there be not a more human burning which marriage must satisfy, or else may be dissolved, than that of copulation, marriage cannot be honorable for the meet reducing and terminating of lust between two; seeing many beasts in voluntary and chosen couples live together as unadulterously, and are as truly married in that respect. But all ingenuous men will see that the dignity and blessing of marriage is placed rather in the mutual enjoyment of that which the wanting soul needfully seeks than of that which the plenteous body would joyfully give away. Hence it is that Plato in his festival discourse brings in Socrates relating what he feigned to have learned from the prophetess Diotima, how Love was the son of Penury, begot of Plenty in the garden of Jupiter.<sup>5</sup> Which divinely sorts with that which in effect Moses tells us, that Love was the son of Loneliness, begot in Paradise by that sociable and helpful aptitude which God implanted between man and woman toward each other. The same, also, is that burning mentioned by St. Paul, whereof marriage ought to be the remedy: the flesh hath other mutual and easy curbs which are in the power of any temperate man. When, therefore, this original and sinless penury, or loneliness of the soul, cannot lay itself down by the side of such a meet and acceptable union as God ordained in marriage, at least in some proportion, it cannot conceive and bring forth love, but remains utterly unmarried under a formal wedlock, and still burns in the proper meaning of St. Paul. Then enters Hate, not that hate that sins, but that which only is natural dissatisfaction and the turning aside from a mistaken object. If that mistake have done injury, it fails not to dismiss with recompense, for to retain still, and not be able to love, is to heap up more injury. Thence

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<sup>5</sup> In *Smectymnuus* (cf. note #32 there) Milton had already professed his enthusiastic interest in the *Symposium*. Here he followed the example of the Florentine Neoplatonists in trying to parallel Plato's myths with parts of Genesis. The parallel between God's creation of Eve to relieve Adam's loneliness (Gen. ii, 18) and the birth of Love from the embrace of Poverty with Plenty in the garden of Jove at the feast of the gods in honor of the birth of Venus (*Symposium*, 203), is more ingenious than convincing.

this wise and pious law of dismissal now defended took beginning: he, therefore, who lacking of his due in the most native and human end of marriage, thinks it better to part than to live sadly and injuriously to that cheerful covenant (for not to be beloved and yet retained, is the greatest injury to a gentle spirit), he, I say, who therefore seeks to part, is one who highly honors the married life and would not stain it: and the reasons which now move him to divorce are equal to the best of those that could first warrant him to marry; for, as was plainly shown, both the hate which now diverts him and the loneliness which leads him still powerfully to seek a fit help, hath not the least grain of a sin in it, if he be worthy to understand himself.

## CHAPTER V.

*The Third Reason of this Law, because without it, he who has happened where he finds nothing but remediless offences and discontents, is in more and greater temptations than ever before.*

THIRDLY, Yet it is next to be feared, if he must be still bound without reason by a deaf rigor, that when he perceives the just expectance of his mind defeated, he will begin even against law to cast about where he may find his satisfaction more complete, unless he be a thing heroically virtuous,<sup>1</sup> and that are not the common lump of men for whom chiefly the laws ought to be made—though not to their sins yet to their unsinning weaknesses, it being above their strength to endure the lonely estate, which while they shunned they are fallen into. And yet there follows upon this a worse temptation. For if he be such as hath spent his youth unblamably and laid up his chiefest earthly comforts in the enjoyment of a contented marriage, nor did neglect that furtherance which was to be obtained therein by constant prayers, when he shall find himself bound fast to an uncomplying discord of nature (or, as it oft happens, to an image of earth and phlegm) with whom he looked to be the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. heroic virtue in *P.L.* XI, 690, note.



copartner of a sweet and gladsome society, and sees withal that his bondage is now inevitable, though he be almost the strongest Christian, he will be ready to despair in virtue, and mutiny against Divine Providence. And this doubtless is the reason of those lapses and that melancholy despair which we see in many wedded persons, though they understand it not, or pretend other causes because they know no remedy; and is of extreme danger. Therefore when human frailty surcharged is at such a loss, charity ought to venture much and use bold physic, lest an overtossed faith endanger to shipwreck.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The fourth Reason of this Law, that God regards Love and Peace in the family more than a compulsive performance of marriage, which is more broke by a grievous continuance than by a needful divorce.*

FOURTHLY, Marriage is a covenant the very being whereof consists not in a forced cohabitation and counterfeit performance of duties, but in unfeigned love and peace. And of matrimonial love, no doubt but that was chiefly meant, which by the ancient sages was thus parabled: that Love, if he be not twin-born, yet hath a brother wondrous like him, called Anteros;<sup>1</sup> whom while he seeks all about, his chance is to meet with many false and feigning desires that wander singly up and down in his likeness. By them in their borrowed garb, Love,<sup>2</sup> though not wholly blind as poets wrong him, yet having

<sup>1</sup> For a survey of the development of the Anteros of Plato's *Phaedrus* (255d) into the deity of reciprocated love between the sexes and even of heavenly love in Neoplatonic works like Mario Equicola's *Libro di natura d' amore* (1525), Augustinus Niphus' *De amore* (1529), and Celio Calagnini's *Anteros sive de mutuo amore* (1544), consult Robert V. Merrill, "Eros and Anteros," *Speculum* XIX, 265-284. Milton expected his readers to be familiar with the figure of Anteros in Alciati's *Emblemata* or Cartari's *Imagini de i dei*, or in Antoine Heroet's *La Parfaicte Amye* (A. Heroet, *Oeuvres poétiques*, ed. by Ferdinand Gohin, Paris, 1909, p. 96) or in numerous passages of the poets of the Pléiade.

<sup>2</sup> Milton thought of Love, or the heavenly Eros, somewhat as Spenser described him in *An Hymne in Honour of Love*:

but one eye, as being born an archer aiming, and that eye not the quickest in this dark region here below which is not Love's proper sphere, partly out of the simplicity and credulity which is native to him, often deceived, embraces and consorts him with these obvious and suborned striplings, as if they were his mother's own sons; for so he thinks them, while they subtly keep themselves most on his blind side. But after a while, as his manner is, when soaring up into the high tower of his Apogæum,<sup>3</sup> above the shadow of the earth, he darts out the direct rays of his then most piercing eyesight upon the impostures and trim disguises that were used with him, and discerns that this is not his genuine brother, as he imagined. He has no longer the power to hold fellowship with such a personated mate. For straight his arrows lose their golden heads and shed their purple feathers, his silken braids untwine and slip their knots, and that original and fiery virtue given him by fate all on a sudden goes out, and leaves him undeified and despoiled of all his force; till finding Anteros at last, he kindles and repairs the almost-faded ammunition of his deity by the reflection of a coequal and homogeneous fire. Thus mine author sung it to me; and by the leave of those who would be counted the only grave ones, this is no mere amatorious novel (though to be wise and skilful in these matters, men heretofore of greatest name in virtue have esteemed it one of the highest arcs that human contemplation circling upward can make from the glassy sea whereon she stands); but this is a deep and serious verity, showing us that love in marriage cannot live nor subsist unless it be mutual; and where love cannot be, there can be left of wedlock nothing but the empty husk of an outside matri-

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Lifting himselfe out of the lowly dust  
On golden plumes up to the purest skie.

(177-8.)

Spenser's Love combines passion with ethical idealism and the conception of a force that moves and harmonizes the universe.

<sup>3</sup> *Apogæum*: a planet's most distant point from the earth. Perhaps there is a vague allusion to "the summit of the heavens," to which Plato describes the gods as ascending "as to a feast and a banquet," and beyond which he says that they pass outside of our skies. (*Phaedrus*, 247b.)

mony, as undelightful and unpleasing to God as any other kind of hypocrisy. So far is his command from tying men to the observance of duties which there is no help for, but they must be dissembled. If Solomon's advice<sup>4</sup> be not over-frolic, "Live joyfully," saith he, "with the wife whom thou lovest, all thy days, for that is thy portion." How then, where we find it impossible to rejoice or to love, can we obey this precept? How miserably do we defraud ourselves of that comfortable portion which God gives us, by striving vainly to glue an error together which God and nature will not join, adding but more vexation and violence to that blissful society by our importunate superstition that will not hearken to St. Paul, I Cor. vii, who, speaking of marriage and divorce, determines plain enough in general that God therein "hath called us to peace, and not to bondage." Yea, God himself commands in his law more than once, and by his prophet Malachi, as Calvin and the best translations read, that "he who hates, let him divorce."<sup>5</sup> that is, he who cannot love. Hence it is that the rabbins, and Maimonides, famous among the rest, in a book<sup>6</sup> of his set forth by Buxtorfius, tells us that "divorce was permitted by Moses to preserve peace in marriage, and quiet in the family." Surely the Jews had their saving peace about them as well as we, yet care was taken that this wholesome provision for household peace should also be allowed them: and must this be denied to Christians? O perverseness! that the law should be

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<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes ix, 9.

<sup>5</sup> The reference is to Malachi ii, 16, one of the most disputed verses in the Bible. In the King James Version it reads: "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away" (*i.e.* divorcing). The context, which is a prophetic allegory representing the Hebrews as having put away the wife of their youth (*i.e.* the worship of Jehovah) for a wife who is a stranger (*i.e.* idol-worship), permits either interpretation. In *Divorce* II, xiii, Milton again says that God "commands divorce" both "in the law and in the prophet Malachi."

<sup>6</sup> The book is *The Guide for the Perplexed*, which was translated from the original Arabic into Hebrew in 1204, and into Latin by Buxtorf in 1629. Translations into modern European languages began with the Italian version in 1580?, but there was no complete English translation until 1889. The author, the great Jewish physician and philosopher, Maimonides, was born in Cordova in 1135, and died in Cairo in 1204.

made more provident of peace-making than the gospel! that the gospel should be put to beg a most necessary help of mercy from the law, but must not have it! and that to grind in the mill of an undelighted and servile copulation must be the only forced work of a Christian marriage, oftentimes with such a yoke-fellow, from whom both love and peace, both nature and religion, mourns to be separated. I cannot therefore be so diffident as not securely to conclude that he who can receive nothing of the most important helps in marriage, being thereby disabled to return that duty which is his, with a clear and hearty countenance, and thus continues to grieve whom he would not, and is no less grieved; that man ought even for love's sake and peace to move divorce upon good and liberal conditions to the divorced. And it is a less breach of wedlock to part with wise and quiet consent betimes, than still to soil and profane that mystery of joy and union with a polluting sadness and perpetual distemper: for it is not the outward continuing of marriage that keeps whole that covenant, but whosoever does most according to peace and love, whether in marriage or in divorce, he it is that breaks marriage least; it being so often written that "Love only is the fulfilling of every commandment."<sup>7</sup>

## BOOK II.

### CHAPTER I.

*The Ordinance of Sabbath and marriage compared. Hyperbole no unfrequent figure in the Gospel. Excess cured by contrary excess. Christ neither did, nor could abrogate the Law of divorce, but only reprove the abuse thereof.*

HITHERTO the position undertaken hath been declared and proved by a law of God, that law proved to be moral and unabolishable, for many reasons equal, honest, charitable, just, annexed thereto. It follows now, that those places of scripture

<sup>7</sup> ". . . love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. xiii, 10.)

which have a seeming to revoke the prudence of Moses, or rather that merciful decree of God, be forthwith explained and reconciled. For what are all these reasonings worth, will some reply, whenas the words of Christ are plainly against all divorce, "except in case of fornication?"<sup>1</sup> To whom he whose mind were to answer no more but this, "except also in case of charity," might safely appeal to the more plain words of Christ in defence of so excepting. "Thou shalt do no manner of work,"<sup>2</sup> saith the commandment of the Sabbath. Yes, saith Christ, works of charity.<sup>3</sup> And shall we be more severe in paraphrasing the considerate and tender gospel than he was in expounding the rigid and peremptory law? What was ever in all appearance less made for man, and more for God alone, than the Sabbath? Yet when the good of man comes into the scales, we hear that voice of infinite goodness and benignity that "Sabbath was made for man, not man for Sabbath."<sup>4</sup> What thing ever was more made for man alone, and less for God, than marriage? And shall we load it with a cruel and senseless bondage utterly against both the good of man and the glory of God? Let whoso will now listen. I want neither pall nor mitre, I stay neither for ordination or induction; but in the firm faith of a knowing Christian, which is the best and truest endowment of the keys,<sup>5</sup> I pronounce, the man who shall bind so cruelly a good and gracious ordinance of God, hath not in that the spirit of Christ. Yet that every text of scripture seeming opposite may be attended with a due exposition, this other part ensues, and makes account to find no slender arguments

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew v, 32.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus xx, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Defending himself against criticism for healing a woman on the Sabbath, Christ asked, "ought not this woman, . . . whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" (Luke xiii, 16.)

<sup>4</sup> Mark ii, 27.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the allusion to St. Peter as the bearer of the keys of the kingdom of heaven in *Lycidas*, 110, and the denial in *Christian Doctrine* I, xxix, that any prelate can derive any authority from Peter, "inasmuch as the power of the keys, as it is called, or the right of binding and loosing, is not entrusted to him alone."

for this assertion, out of those very scriptures which are commonly urged against it.

First therefore let us remember, as a thing not to be denied, that all places of scripture wherein just reason of doubt arises from the letter, are to be expounded by considering upon what occasion everything is set down, and by comparing other texts. The occasion which induced our Saviour to speak of divorce, was either to convince the extravagance of the pharisees in that point, or to give a sharp and vehement answer to a tempting question.<sup>6</sup> And in such cases, that we are not to repose all upon the literal terms of so many words, many instances will teach us: wherein we may plainly discover how Christ meant not to be taken word for word, but like a wise physician, administering one excess against another to reduce us to a perfect mean. Where the pharisees were strict, there Christ seems remiss; where they were too remiss, he saw it needful to seem most severe. In one place he censures an unchaste look to be adultery already committed.<sup>7</sup> Another time he passes over actual adultery<sup>8</sup> with less reproof than for an unchaste look, not so heavily condemning secret weakness as open malice. So here he may be justly thought to have given this rigid sentence against divorce, not to cut off all remedy from a good man, who finds himself consuming away in a disconsolate and unenjoyed matrimony, but to lay a bridle upon the bold abuses of those overweening rabbis; which he could not more effectually do than by a countersway of restraint curbing their wild exorbitance almost into the other extreme, as when we bow things the contrary way to make them come to their natural straightness. And that this was the only intention of Christ is most evident if we attend but to his own words and protestation made in the same sermon, not many verses before he treats of divorcing, that he came not to abrogate from the law

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. chapter I, note 2.

<sup>7</sup> The verse is from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew v, 18.

<sup>8</sup> Christ's only words to the woman "taken in adultery" were, "Go, and sin no more." (John viii, 11.)

"one jot or tittle,"<sup>9</sup> and denounces against them that shall so teach.

But St. Luke, the verse immediately before going that of divorce, inserts the same caveat, as if the latter could not be understood without the former; and as a witness to produce against this our wilful mistake of abrogating, which must needs confirm us that whatever else in the political law<sup>10</sup> of more special relation to the Jews might cease to us, yet that of those precepts concerning divorce, not one of them was repealed by the doctrine of Christ, unless we have vowed not to believe his own cautious and immediate profession. For if these our Saviour's words inveigh against all divorce and condemn it as adultery, except it be for adultery, and be not rather understood against the abuse of those divorces permitted in the law, then is that law of Moses, Deut. xxiv. 1, not only repealed and wholly annulled against the promise of Christ and his known profession not to meddle in matters judicial, but that which is more strange, the very substance and purpose of that law is contradicted, and convinced both of injustice and impurity, as having authorized and maintained legal adultery by statute. Moses also cannot scape to be guilty of unequal and unwise decrees, punishing one act of secret adultery by death, and permitting a whole life of open adultery by law. And albeit lawyers write that some political edicts, though not approved, are yet allowed to the scum of the people and the necessity of the times, these excuses have but a weak pulse. For first, we read, not that the scoundrel people, but the choicest, the wisest, the holiest of that nation have frequently used these laws, or such as these, in the best and holiest times. Secondly, be it yielded that in matters not very bad or impure, a human law-giver may slacken something of that which is exactly good, to the disposition of the people and the times. But if the perfect,

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<sup>9</sup> "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

"Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." (Luke xvi, 17-8.)

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Introduction #45-7.

the pure, the righteous law of God (for so are all his statutes and his judgements) be found to have allowed smoothly, without any certain reprehension, that which Christ afterward declares to be adultery, how can we free this law from the horrible indictment of being both impure, unjust and fallacious?

### *Extract from* CHAPTER III

The Jesuits and that sect among us which is named of Arminius,<sup>1</sup> are wont to charge us of making God the author of sin, in two degrees especially, not to speak of his permission: 1. Because we hold that he hath decreed some to damnation, and consequently to sin, say they; next, Because those means which are of saving knowledge to others, he makes to them an occasion of greater sin. Yet considering the perfection wherein man was created<sup>2</sup> and might have stood, no degree necessitating his freewill, but subsequent, though not in time yet in order, to causes which were in his own power, they might methinks be persuaded to absolve both God and us. Whenas the doctrine of Plato<sup>3</sup> and Chrysippus<sup>4</sup> with their followers, the Academics and the Stoics, who knew not what a consummate and most

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<sup>1</sup> In his reply to his Calvinist opponents at the University of Leyden in October, 1604, Arminius charged that by their extreme interpretation of the doctrine of Predestination they represented God as "the author of sin; nor that alone; but also that God really sins, nay, that God alone sins." Whereas God made Christ "the mediator to save all who should believe on Him, . . . God foreknew, but did not foreordain, who would be saved, and who would be damned." (Quoted by W. K. Jordan, *Development of Religious Toleration in England, 1603-40*, p. 325. Cf. *C.D.* I, iv.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Introduction #6 and 110.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps Milton thought of the place in Plato's theodicy in the *Laws* X, 904ab, where proof of the goodness of the soul of the universe is followed by the statement that evil is altogether a matter of the individual wills which, in their various situations in the universe, determine their own characters by their desires.

<sup>4</sup> Almost nothing remains except quotations in other writers of the voluminous works of Chrysippus (280-207 B.C.), who followed Zeno and Cleanthes in founding Stoicism. In Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus* II, 9, he is represented as teaching that man's creation with the faculty of choice imposed responsibility for his conduct upon him.



adorned Pandora<sup>5</sup> was bestowed upon Adam to be the nurse and guide of his arbitrary happiness and perseverance, I mean his native innocence and perfection, which might have kept him from being our true Epimetheus; and though they taught of virtue and vice to be both the gift of divine destiny, they could yet give reasons not invalid to justify the councils of God and fate from the insulsiety of mortal tongues:—that man's own will self-corrupted is the adequate and sufficient cause of his disobedience besides fate; as Homer<sup>6</sup> also wanted not to express, both in his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. And Manilius<sup>7</sup> the poet, although in his fourth book he tells of some "created both to sin and punishment," yet without murmuring, and with an industrious cheerfulness, acquits the Deity. They were not ignorant in their heathen lore that it is most godlike to punish those who of his creatures became his enemies with the greatest punishment; and they could attain also to think that the greatest, when God himself throws a man furthest from him; which then they held he did, when he blinded, hardened and stirred up his offenders to finish and pile up their desperate work since they had undertaken it. To banish for ever into a local hell, whether in the air or in the centre, or in that uttermost and bottomless gulf of chaos, deeper from holy bliss than the world's diameter multiplied, they thought had not a punishing so proper and proportionate for God to inflict as to punish sin

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<sup>5</sup> In the story of Pandora it is Epimetheus (Afterthought), the brother of her husband, Prometheus (Forethought), who opens the fatal box and brings all manner of evil upon men.

<sup>6</sup> Milton's reference may be to the opening of the *Iliad*, where Achilles' violence is said to have fulfilled the council of Zeus. The *Odyssey* I, 9, says that the followers of Ulysses "perished, self-destroyed by their own fault," and at the end of his chapter on Predestination in *C.D.* I, iv, Milton quoted the line and the more emphatic passage that follows (ll. 40-5):

Perverse mankind! whose wills, created free,  
Charge all their woes on absolute decree:  
All to the dooming gods their guilt translate,  
And follies are miscalled the crimes of fate.

(Pope's version.)

<sup>7</sup> Manilius (who seems to have been a contemporary of Augustus and Tiberius) says that we rightly hate those who are "created to guilt and punishment," and that crime is not to be imputed to heaven. (*Astronomicon* IV, 115-7.)

with sin. Thus were the common sort of Gentiles wont to think, without any wry thoughts cast upon divine governance. And therefore Cicero,<sup>8</sup> not in his Tusculan or Campanian retirements among the learned wits of that age, but even in the senate to a mixed auditory (though he were sparing otherwise to broach his philosophy among statists and lawyers), yet as to this point, both in his *Oration against Piso*, and in that which is about the answers of the soothsayers against Clodius, he declares it publicly as no paradox to common ears that God cannot punish man more, nor make him more miserable, than still by making him more sinful. Thus we see how in this controversy the justice of God stood upright even among heathen disputers. But if any one be truly and not pretendedly zealous for God's honor, here I call him forth before men and angels, to use his best and most advised skill lest God more unavoidably than ever yet, and in the guiltiest manner, be made the author of sin: if he shall not only deliver over and incite his enemies by rebuke to sin as a punishment, but shall by patent under his own broad seal<sup>9</sup> allow his friends whom he would sanctify and save, whom he would unite to himself and not disjoin, whom he would correct by wholesome chastening, and not punish as he doth the damned by lewd sinning; if he shall allow these in his law, the perfect rule of his own purest will and our most edified conscience, the perpetrating of an odious and manifold sin without the least contesting. 'Tis wondered how there can be in God a secret and revealed will,<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> In the oration to the Senate *On behalf of Milo* (86) Cicero dramatically described the Latian gods as having been outraged by Clodius, and as having inspired him and his gang with the madness that drove them to their deaths in their lawless attack on Milo in the Appian Way. In the oration *Against Piso* (46) Cicero asserted that the extreme crimes of the wicked are "the most inevitable of the penalties ordained for them by the immortal gods."

<sup>9</sup> Royal patents or licenses were issued under the broad seal of the English kings.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Milton's assault in the chapter on Predestination in *Christian Doctrine* on "the scholastic distinction which ascribes a two-fold will to God; his revealed will, whereby he prescribes the way in which he desires us to act, and his hidden will, whereby he decrees that we shall never so act."

and yet what wonder, if there be in man two answerable causes. But here there must be two revealed wills grappling in a fraternal war with one another without any reasonable cause apprehended. This cannot be less than to engraft sin into the substance of the law, which law is to provoke sin by crossing and forbidding, not by complying with it. Nay, this is, which I tremble in uttering, to incarnate sin into the unpunishing and well-pleased will of God. To avoid these dreadful consequences that tread upon the heels of those allowances to sin, will be a task of far more difficulty than to appease those minds which perhaps out of a vigilant and wary conscience except against predestination. Thus finally we may conclude that a law wholly giving licence cannot upon any good consideration be given to a holy people, for hardness of heart in the vulgar sense.

## AREOPAGITICA\*

### A SPEECH FOR THE LIBERTY OF UNLICENSED PRINTING, TO THE PARLIAMENT OF ENGLAND

This is true liberty, when free-born men,  
Having to advise the public, may speak free,  
Which he who can, and will, deserves high praise;  
Who neither can nor will, may hold his peace;  
What can be juster in a State than this?

EURIPIDES, *The Suppliants*.

THEY who to states<sup>1</sup> and governors of the Commonwealth direct their speech, High Court of Parliament, or, wanting such access in a private condition, write that which they foresee may advance the public good; I suppose them, as at the beginning of no mean endeavor, not a little altered and moved inwardly in their minds: some with doubt of what will be the success,<sup>2</sup> others with fear of what will be the censure;<sup>3</sup> some with hope, others with confidence of what they have to speak. And me perhaps each of these dispositions, as the subject was whereon I entered, may have at other times variously affected; and likely might in these foremost expressions now also disclose which of them swayed most, but that the very attempt of this address thus made, and the thought of whom it hath recourse to, hath got the power within me to a passion,<sup>4</sup> far more welcome than incidental to a preface.

Which though I stay not to confess ere any ask, I shall be

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<sup>1</sup> *states*: men of high estate, grantees. Cf. the "infernal States" addressed by Satan in *P.L.* II, 387. *altered*: disturbed.

<sup>2</sup> *success*: outcome or consequence. Cf. Belial casting "Ominous conjecture on the whole success" of the devils' plans. *P.L.* II, 123.

<sup>3</sup> *censure*: judgment, estimate. Cf. the verb in *S.A.*, 787: "that men may censure thine The gentler. . . ."

<sup>4</sup> *passion*: ardent interest or enthusiastic absorption (in writing).

blameless, if it be no other than the joy and gratulation<sup>5</sup> which it brings to all who wish and promote their country's liberty; whereof this whole discourse proposed will be a certain testimony, if not a trophy. For this is not the liberty which we can hope, that no grievance ever should arise in the Commonwealth—that let no man in this world expect; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply considered, and speedily reformed, then is the utmost bound of civil liberty attained that wise men look for.<sup>6</sup> To which, if I now manifest by the very sound of this which I shall utter, that we are already in good part arrived, and yet from such a steep disadvantage of tyranny and superstition grounded into our principles as was beyond the manhood of a Roman recovery;<sup>7</sup> it will be attributed first, as is most due, to the strong assistance of God our deliverer, next, to your faithful guidance and undaunted wisdom, Lords and Commons of England.

Neither is it in God's esteem the diminution of his glory, when honorable things are spoken of good men and worthy magistrates; which if I now first should begin to do, after so fair a progress of your laudable deeds and such a long obligation<sup>8</sup> upon the whole realm to your indefatigable virtues, I might be justly reckoned among the tardiest and the unwillingest of them that praise ye.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, there being three principal things, without which all praising is but courtship and flattery: first, when that only is praised which is solidly worth praise; next, when greatest likelihoods are brought that such things are truly and really in those persons to whom they are ascribed; the other, when he who praises, by showing that such his actual persuasion is of whom he writes, can demonstrate that he flatters not; the former two of these I have heretofore endeavored, rescuing the

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<sup>5</sup> *gratulation*: satisfaction, self-congratulation.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Introduction #72.

<sup>7</sup> The contrast is between England's successful revolt against King Charles and the bishops, as opposed to the impotence of Rome to shake off the tyranny into which she fell under the emperors and popes.

<sup>8</sup> *obligement*: obligation, indebtedness.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Introduction #66-7.

employment from him who went about to impair your merits with a trivial and malignant encomium;<sup>10</sup> the latter, as belonging chiefly to mine own acquittal, that whom I so extolled I did not flatter, hath been reserved opportunely to this occasion. For he who freely magnifies what hath been nobly done, and fears not to declare as freely what might be done better, gives ye the best covenant of his fidelity; and that his loyalest affection and his hope waits on your proceedings. His highest praising is not flattery, and his plainest advice is a kind of praising; for though I should affirm and hold by argument that it would fare better with truth, with learning, and the Commonwealth, if one of your published orders,<sup>11</sup> which I should name, were called in; yet at the same time it could not but much redound to the lustre of your mild and equal<sup>12</sup> government, whenas private persons are hereby animated to think ye better pleased with public advice than other statist<sup>13</sup> have been delighted heretofore with public flattery. And men will then see what difference there is between the magnanimity of a triennial Parliament,<sup>14</sup> and that jealous haughtiness of prelates and cabin Counsellors<sup>15</sup> that usurped<sup>16</sup> of late, whenas they shall observe ye in the midst of your victories and successes more gently brooking written exceptions against a voted order than other courts, which had produced nothing worth memory

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<sup>10</sup> *encomium*: praise, probably by Bishop Hall. Cf. Introduction #66.

<sup>11</sup> The Order for Printing. Cf. Introduction #57.

<sup>12</sup> *equal*: impartial.

<sup>13</sup> *statists*: statesmen. Cf. "Statists indeed, And lovers of their country." P.R. IV, 354-5.

<sup>14</sup> By an act of 15 February, 1641, Parliament provided that it should be summoned at least once every three years.

<sup>15</sup> *cabin*: cabinet or council chamber. The "cabin counsellors" of Charles I were the little groups of intimate advisers, most of whom held offices of the highest trust and prominence, with whose aid the king governed without summoning Parliament between 1614 and 1621 and between 1629 and 1640. From 1603 until 1640 "parliamentary sessions totalled less than four-and-a-half in thirty-seven years," and "the centre of government . . . lay in the royal council." D. L. Keir, *The Constitutional History of Modern Britain* (1938), pp. 162-3.

<sup>16</sup> *usurped*: appropriated power illegitimately. Cf. "So Jove usurping reigned." P.L. I, 514.

but the weak ostentation of wealth, would have endured the least signified dislike at any sudden proclamation.

If I should thus far presume upon the meek demeanor of your civil<sup>17</sup> and gentle greatness, Lords and Commons, as what your published order hath directly said, that to gainsay, I might defend myself with ease, if any should accuse me of being new or insolent, did they but know how much better I find ye esteem it to imitate the old and elegant humanity of Greece, than the barbaric pride of a Hunnish<sup>18</sup> and Norwegian stateliness. And out of those ages, to whose polite wisdom and letters we owe that we are not yet Goths and Jutlanders, I could name him<sup>19</sup> who from his private house wrote that discourse to the Parliament of Athens, that persuades them to change the form of democracy which was then established. Such honor was done in those days to men who professed the study of wisdom and eloquence, not only in their own country but in other lands, that cities and seignories<sup>20</sup> heard them gladly and with great respect, if they had aught in public to admonish the state. Thus did Dion Prusæus,<sup>21</sup> a stranger and a private

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<sup>17</sup> *civil*: civilized, polite.

<sup>18</sup> Milton thought not only of the contemporary reputation of the Scandinavians, but also of the incursions into Britain by the Jutes and other Germanic tribes which finally conquered it in 449 A.D. In *History of Britain*, I (C.E. X, 15), he recalled that Scotland had been invaded by "Humber, King of the Huns, who with a fleet invaded that land, was slain in fight, and his people driven back."

<sup>19</sup> Isocrates: Cf. Introduction #68. The words, as T. H. White shows, closely follow Dionysius of Helicarnassus in *De Antiquis Oratoribus Commentarii* (edition of 1781, p. 83).

<sup>20</sup> "A Monarch Signorial is he who by force of Arms and just War is made owner of Mens Bodies and Goods, and governeth them as a Master of a Family governeth base Servants and Slaves." *The Arts of Empire and Mysteries of States Discabinated*, by Sir Walter Raleigh, published by John Milton. (Edition of 1692, p. 5.) Turkey and the West Indies are mentioned as typical signories.

<sup>21</sup> Dion, called Chrysostomos or Golden-Mouth, was born in Prusa about the middle of the first century A.D., went to Rome and found the emperor Domitian's government unfriendly to a philosopher with convictions about the Greek tradition of freedom and virtue. He became a popular "lecturer" on such subjects in the cities of Asia Minor and Greece. Trajan patronized him, and he died in high reputation about 113 A.D. The law against which he counselled the Rhodians permitted the erasure of the

orator, counsel the Rhodians against a former edict; and I abound with other like examples, which to set here would be superfluous. But if from the industry of a life wholly dedicated to studious labors, and those natural endowments haply not the worst for two and fifty degrees of northern latitude,<sup>22</sup> so much must be derogated, as to count me not equal to any of those who had this privilege, I would obtain to be thought not so inferior as yourselves are superior to the most of them who received their counsel: and how far you excel them, be assured, Lords and Commons, there can no greater testimony appear, than when your prudent spirit acknowledges and obeys the voice of reason from what quarter soever it be heard speaking; and renders ye as willing to repeal any act of your own setting forth, as any set forth by your predecessors.

If ye be thus resolved, as it were injury to think ye were not, I know not what should withhold me from presenting ye with a fit instance wherein to show both that love of truth which ye eminently profess, and that uprightness of your judgment which is not wont to be partial to yourselves; by judging over again that Order which ye have ordained *to regulate Printing: that no book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth printed, unless the same be first approved and licensed by such, or at least one of such as shall be thereto appointed.* For that part which preserves justly every man's copy<sup>23</sup> to himself, or provides for the poor, I touch not, only wish they be not made pretences to abuse and persecute honest and painful<sup>24</sup> men, who offend not in either of these particulars. But that other clause of licensing books, which we thought had died with his brother *quadragesimal*<sup>25</sup> and *matrimonial*<sup>26</sup> when the prelates expired,

names on public statues to make room for those of statesmen in power at the moment. (*Thirty-first Discourse, 8-10.*)

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Manso*, 28, *P.L.* IX, 45, and *C.G.*, note 129.

<sup>23</sup> *copy*: copyright.

<sup>24</sup> *painful*: diligent, willing to take pains.

<sup>25</sup> *quadragesimal*: pertaining to the forty days of Lent. The Puritans had relaxed the traditional, Anglican restrictions on diet during Lent.

<sup>26</sup> Milton approved Parliament's act in securing the "civil liberty of marriage; transferring ratifying and registering of marriage to the civil magistrates." (*C.E.* VI, 73.)



I shall now attend with such a homily as shall lay before ye, first, the inventors of it to be those whom ye will be loth to own; next, what is to be thought in general of reading, whatever sort the books be; and that this Order avails nothing to the suppressing of scandalous, seditious, and libellous books, which were mainly intended to be suppressed. Last, that it will be primely to the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of truth, not only by disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindering and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made both in religious and civil wisdom.

I deny not but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors. For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them.<sup>27</sup> I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men.<sup>28</sup> And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's

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<sup>27</sup> Among several other writers, Samuel Daniel anticipated Milton's famous definition of a book. Cf. *Musophilus*, 177-86:

... the words thou scornest now  
 May live, the speaking picture of the mind,  
 The extract of the soul that labored how  
 To leave the image of herself behind,  
 Wherein posterity that love to know  
 The just proportion of our spirits may find.  
 For these lines are the veins, the arteries,  
 And undecaying life-strings of those hearts  
 That still shall pant, and still shall exercise  
 The motion spirit and nature both imparts.

<sup>28</sup> In *Metamorphoses* III, 95-126, Ovid relates the sowing of the teeth of the dragon which was killed by Cadmus, king of Thebes. The planted teeth instantly sprang up as armed men, who instantly attacked one another and within an hour were almost all slain.

image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.<sup>29</sup> 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, wherof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labors of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fift essence,<sup>30</sup> the breath of reason itself, slays an immortality rather than a life. But lest I should be condemned of introducing licence, while I oppose licensing, I refuse not the pains to be so much historical as will serve to show what hath been done by ancient and famous commonwealths against this disorder, till the very time that this project of licensing crept out of the Inquisition,<sup>31</sup> was caught up by our prelates, and hath caught some of our presbyters.

In Athens, where books and wits were ever busier than in any other part of Greece, I find but only two sorts of writings

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Henry Vaughan, *To his Books*:

Bright books! the *perspectives* to our weak sights:

The clear *projections* of discerning lights.

Burning and shining *Thoughts*; man's posthume *day*:

The *track* of fled souls, and their *Milkie-way*.

The dead *alive* and *busie*, the still *voice*

Of inlarg'd Spirits, . . .

<sup>30</sup> *Quintessence*: Latin, *quinta essentia*. "The 'fifth essence' of ancient and medieval philosophy, supposed to be the substance of which the heavenly bodies were composed, and to be . . . latent in all things, the extraction of it by distillation or other methods being one of the great objects of alchemy." (*N.E.D.*) Cf. *P.L.* III, 715-8.

<sup>31</sup> Milton referred not only to the Spanish Inquisition which was instituted in Spain in 1480 and took strong measures against heresy in Holland in the sixteenth century, but also to the whole inquisitorial movement which was first instituted by the Council of Toulouse in 1229. Cf. Introduction #55.

which the magistrate cared to take notice of; those either blasphemous and atheistical, or libellous. Thus the books of Protagoras<sup>32</sup> were by the judges of Areopagus<sup>33</sup> commanded to be burnt, and himself banished the territory for a discourse begun with his confessing not to know whether there were gods, or whether not. And against defaming, it was decreed that none should be traduced by name, as was the manner of *Vetus Comœdia*,<sup>34</sup> whereby we may guess how they censured libelling; and this course was quick enough, as Cicero<sup>35</sup> writes, to quell both the desperate wits of other atheists, and the open way of defaming, as the event showed. Of other sects and opinions, though tending to voluptuousness, and the denying of divine providence, they took no heed. Therefore we do not read that either Epicurus,<sup>36</sup> or that libertine school of Cyrene,<sup>37</sup> or what the Cynic impudence uttered,<sup>38</sup> was ever

<sup>32</sup> Protagoras (?480-411 B.C.) of Abdera, in Thrace, was the first of the great sophists or professional teachers of rhetoric. In 411 he was impeached for a theological treatise which began by disclaiming all knowledge on his part as to whether or not the gods existed. The book was burned and Protagoras is said to have been banished from Athens.

<sup>33</sup> "Scorners or Despisers of the gods," wrote Thomas Heywood in *The Hierarchie of the blessed Angells* (1635), p. 32, were "convented before the Areopagitæ; and beeing convicted, their goods were sold at a publique out-cry, and their irreligions grauen upon pillars, to make their persons odible."

<sup>34</sup> *Vetus Comœdia*: in the Old Comedy of Athens, says Gilbert Norwood in *Greek Comedy* (1931), p. 28, "we know certainly of but one law restraining" comic freedom of personal reference, and that "endured from 440-39 till 438-7, less than three years."

<sup>35</sup> The reference is to Cicero's treatise *On the Nature of the Gods* I, xxiii, where the punishment of Protagoras is regarded as having done much to repress open atheism, "inasmuch as even doubt" of the existence of the gods "was punished."

<sup>36</sup> Epicurus taught that the gods existed, but in no way concerned themselves about human affairs. Cf. *C.G.*, note 221.

<sup>37</sup> The life of the founder of the Cyrenaic school, Aristippus, as told by Diogenes Laertius, contains many scandalous stories of his libertinism. Cf. *C.G.*, note 221.

<sup>38</sup> The stories of Diogenes' search in open daylight with a lantern for an honest man, and of his contempt for Alexander's invitation to live at court in preference to his tub or shack, illustrate the severity and unconventionality of the Cynics, whose most famous representative he was. They made virtue rigorously the sole object of life.

questioned by the laws. Neither is it recorded that the writings of those old comedians were suppressed, though the acting of them were forbid; and that Plato<sup>39</sup> commended the reading of Aristophanes, the loosest of them all, to his royal scholar Dionysius, is commonly known, and may be excused, if holy Chrysostom,<sup>40</sup> as is reported, nightly studied so much the same author, and had the art to cleanse a scurrilous vehemence into the style of a rousing sermon.

That other leading city of Greece, Lacedæmon, considering that Lycurgus<sup>41</sup> their lawgiver was so addicted to elegant learning as to have been the first that brought out of Ionia the scattered works of Homer, and sent the poet Thales<sup>42</sup> from Crete to prepare and mollify the Spartan surliness with his smooth songs and odes, the better to plant among them law and civility, it is to be wondered how museless<sup>43</sup> and unbookish they were, minding nought but the feats of war. There needed no licensing of books among them, for they disliked all but their own laconic apothegms, and took a slight occasion to chase Archi-

<sup>39</sup> The tradition that Plato recommended Aristophanes' comedies to Dionysius (the Elder?), Tyrant of Syracuse from 367 to 356 B.C. and from 346 to 343 B.C., goes back to the short, ancient life of Aristophanes which is to be found in the Teubner edition of his plays.

<sup>40</sup> An interest in Aristophanes on the part of John Chrysostom (347-407 A.D.), the "golden mouthed" bishop of Constantinople, would seem noteworthy to Puritans who honored him most because (according to Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* VI, xvi) he was banished from his see for opposing the idolatrous honor paid to the empress Eudoxia and the "common playes and shewes" that she approved. (Meredith Hanmer's translation, 1585.) In the first printed edition of Aristophanes' plays (1498) "Aldo Manuzio says that St. John Chrysostom was so fond of (them) that he constantly had with him a copy of (them), that he always put them beneath his pillow at night, . . . and that to his constant study of this poet he owed his unmatched eloquence and his hatred of vice." Louis E. Lord, *Aristophanes, his Plays and Influence*, p. 97.

<sup>41</sup> *Lycurgus*: Cf. Introduction #12 and *Of Education*, note 73.

<sup>42</sup> Thales, one of the earliest Ionian poets, is mentioned in Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* (IV, v) as having been persuaded by Lycurgus to leave his home in Crete and settle in Sparta. "His odes," says Plutarch, "were so many persuasives to obedience and unanimity, and . . . they softened insensibly the manners of the audience, drew them often from the animosities which then prevailed, and united them in zeal for . . . virtue."

<sup>43</sup> *museless*: unfamiliar with the Muses, goddesses of poetry and the other arts.

lochus<sup>44</sup> out of their city, perhaps for composing in a higher strain than their own soldierly ballads and roundels could reach to; or if it were for his broad verses, they were not therein so cautious, but they were as dissolute in their promiscuous conversing; whence Euripides<sup>45</sup> affirms in *Andromache*, that their women were all unchaste. Thus much may give us light after what sort books were prohibited among the Greeks.

The Romans also, for many ages trained up only to a military roughness, resembling most the Lacedæmonian guise, knew of learning little but what their twelve tables,<sup>46</sup> and the Pontific College with their augurs and flamens<sup>47</sup> taught them in religion and law, so unacquainted with other learning, that when Carneades<sup>48</sup> and Critolaus,<sup>49</sup> with the Stoic Diogenes<sup>50</sup> coming

<sup>44</sup> Archilochus (early seventh century B.C.) "took delight in flouting the conventions of the aristocracy" (H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Literature*, p. 89) and may have earned his traditional banishment from Sparta for his supposedly licentious verses or for his poem boasting of his own cowardice in throwing away his shield in a retreat.

<sup>45</sup> Opinion in the ancient world differed about the Spartan practice of encouraging girls to exercise naked as men did in the gymnasia, publicly. Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* justified the practice, but Plato mentioned (*Laws*, 806a) Sparta in his times as a scandalous example of the effects of bad discipline among women, and Aristotle (*Politics* II, 9, 5-13) says that the Spartan women lived in "every kind of intemperance and self-indulgence." In *Andromache*, 590-3, Euripides wrote: "No! a Spartan maid could not be chaste, e'en if she would, who leaves her home and bares her limbs and lets her robe float free, to share with youths their races and their sports." (Coleridge's translation.)

<sup>46</sup> *twelve tables*: Cf. *Of Education* #75.

<sup>47</sup> The Pontific College went back to the most revered of the half-legendary Roman kings, Numa, and its president, the Pontifex Maximus, was the greatest religious dignitary in republican Rome. The flamens were priests subordinate to the *pontifices*, and the augurs, whose business it was to consult the omens before public acts such as battles, treaties and holidays, composed another priestly college. Cf. "the flamens at their service quaint" (*Nativity Ode*, 194).

<sup>48</sup> Carneades (?213-129 B.C.), the founder of the Third or New Academy at Athens, was a skeptic and an opponent of Stoicism. In 155 B.C. he was sent from Athens to Rome with Diogenes and Critolaus to protest against a fine which had been assessed against the Athenians for destroying Oropus. In Rome he shocked public opinion by first defending and then attacking the principle of justice in two formal addresses.

<sup>49</sup> Critolaus was the head of the Peripatetic or Aristotelian School of philosophy in Athens in the middle of the second century B.C.

<sup>50</sup> Diogenes succeeded Zeno as head of the Stoic School at Athens. He

ambassadors to Rome, took thereby occasion to give the city a taste of their philosophy, they were suspected for seducers by no less a man than Cato<sup>51</sup> the Censor, who moved it in the Senate to dismiss them speedily, and to banish all such Attic babblers out of Italy. But Scipio<sup>52</sup> and others of the noblest senators withstood him and his old Sabine austerity; honored and admired the men; and the censor himself at last, in his old age, fell to the study of that whereof before he was so scrupulous. And yet at the same time, Nævius<sup>53</sup> and Plautus,<sup>54</sup> the first Latin comedians, had filled the city with all the borrowed scenes of Menander<sup>55</sup> and Philemon.<sup>56</sup>

Then began to be considered there also what was to be done to libellous books and authors; for Nævius was quickly cast into prison for his unbridled pen, and released by the tribunes upon his recantation; we read also that libels were burnt, and the

must not be confused with Diogenes the Cynic, to whom note 38 above refers.

<sup>51</sup> The elder Cato (?234-149 B.C.) was Censor in 184, and was a proverbial exemplar of the primitive and rather philistine Roman virtues. Bacon tells the story of his punishment "for his blasphemy against learning, . . . for when he was past threescore years old, he was taken with an extreme desire to go to school again, and to learn the Greek tongue, to the end to peruse the Greek authors, which doth well demonstrate that his former censure of the Grecian learning was rather an affected gravity than according to the inward sense of his own opinion." *Advancement of Learning*, pp. 186-7.

<sup>52</sup> Scipio the Younger (?185-129 B.C.), who captured Carthage in 146, was friendly with Terence and Polybius and other writers. In Cicero's dialogue *On Friendship* his geniality and his esteem for the virtues that Cato practiced on his Sabine farm were familiar to every schoolboy.

<sup>53</sup> Nævius produced the first of his satiric plays about 235 B.C. He was imprisoned for attacking Scipio the younger and the aristocratic party in his plays and obliged to recant. He died in exile in Utica ?202 B.C.

<sup>54</sup> Plautus (?254-184 B.C.) was the most popular of Roman writers of comedy.

<sup>55</sup> Menander (342-291 B.C.) wrote over one hundred comedies, the surviving portions of seven of which are almost our only representation of the Athenian New Comedy, upon which Plautus' plays were modelled. Cf. note 34 above.

<sup>56</sup> Philemon (?361-263 B.C.) was a rival of Menander. Only a few short fragments of his plays survive, but two of them are suggested as sources which Plautus followed closely in his *Mercaior* and *Trinummus*.

makers punished by Augustus.<sup>57</sup> The like severity, no doubt, was used, if aught were impiously written against their esteemed gods. Except in these two points, how the world went in books, the magistrate kept no reckoning. And therefore Lucretius<sup>58</sup> without impeachment versifies his Epicurism to Memmius, and had the honor to be set forth the second time by Cicero, so great a father of the commonwealth; although himself disputes against that opinion in his own writings. Nor was the satirical sharpness or naked plainness of Lucilius,<sup>59</sup> or Catullus,<sup>60</sup> or Flaccus,<sup>61</sup> by any order prohibited.

And for matters of state, the story of Titus Livius,<sup>62</sup> though it extolled that part<sup>63</sup> which Pompey held, was not therefore suppressed by Octavius Cæsar of the other faction. But that Naso<sup>64</sup> was by him banished in his old age for the wanton poems of his youth, was but a mere covert of state over some secret cause: and besides, the books were neither banished nor

<sup>57</sup> In the *Annals* I, lxxii, Tacitus says that Augustus was so disturbed by the insolent libels of Cassius Severus against the most illustrious men and women in Rome that he became concerned for the enactment of a law against libel.

<sup>58</sup> Lucretius' *De rerum natura* was dedicated to Gaius Memmius Gemellus, who was praetor in 58 B.C. The great poem frankly defends the Epicurean views about the gods (cf. note 36 above) and about the mortality of the soul. The belief that Cicero edited Lucretius rests upon a vague statement of St. Jerome in his additions to Eusebius' *Chronicon*, and is hardly consistent with Cicero's attacks on Epicureanism in *Tusculan Disputations* II and III, and the *De Fimibus* I and II.

<sup>59</sup> Lucilius (148-103 B.C.) is usually recognized as the founder of Roman satire.

<sup>60</sup> Among the vivid lyrics of Catullus (87-47? B.C.) were some lampoons of Caesar and his partisans.

<sup>61</sup> Quintus Horatius Flaccus (Horace, 65-8 B.C.) hardly challenged censorship of any kind by his *Satires*.

<sup>62</sup> Titus Livius (59 B.C.-17 A.D.) wrote a history of Rome from the founding of the city to the death of Drusus in 9 A.D. The book to which Milton refers here is lost, but in Tacitus' *Annals* IV, 34, the fact which he mentions occurs. Though Livy, says Tacitus, praised Pompey so highly that Augustus called him Pompeianus, the friendship of the emperor for the historian was not at all impaired.

<sup>63</sup> *part*: party or faction.

<sup>64</sup> *Naso*: Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso) was banished to Tomi near the mouth of the Danube; tradition says less on account of his licentious poems than for an intrigue with the granddaughter of the Emperor Augustus, Julia. He died at Tomi in 18 A.D.

called in. From hence we shall meet with little else but tyranny in the Roman empire,<sup>65</sup> that we may not marvel, if not so often bad as good books were silenced. I shall therefore deem to have been large enough in producing what among the ancients was punishable to write, save only which, all other arguments were free to treat on.

By this time the emperors were become Christians, whose discipline in this point I do not find to have been more severe than what was formerly in practice. The books of those whom they took to be grand heretics<sup>66</sup> were examined, refuted, and condemned in the general councils;<sup>67</sup> and not till then were prohibited, or burnt, by authority of the emperor. As for the writings of heathen authors, unless they were plain invectives against Christianity, as those of Porphyrius<sup>68</sup> and Proclus,<sup>69</sup> they met with no interdict that can be cited, till about the year 400, in a Carthaginian Council,<sup>70</sup> wherein bishops themselves were forbid to read the books of Gentiles, but heresies they might read: while others long before them, on the contrary, scrupled more the books of heretics than of Gentiles. And that the primitive councils and bishops were wont only to declare what books were not commendable, passing no further, but leaving it to each one's conscience to read or to lay by, till

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<sup>65</sup> So in the Epistle Dedicatory to *The Liberty of Prophecy* Jeremy Taylor quoted Tacitus' *Agricola* to prove that under the more tyrannous Roman emperors books were suppressed by "an illiterate policy" which supposed that "such indirect and uningenuous proceedings can, among wise and free men, disgrace the authors and disrepute their discourses."

<sup>66</sup> "Heresy," said Milton in *Of True Religion*, "is in the will and choice professedly against scripture; error is against the will, in misunderstanding the scripture." (C.E. VI, 167.)

<sup>67</sup> The first general council of the Church was held at Nicæa in Bithynia in 325 A.D.

<sup>68</sup> Porphyry (233-305? A.D.) is said to have been a pupil of Origen in his youth and to have turned against Christianity after coming under the influence of Plotinus in Rome. His book against Christianity was publicly destroyed by order of the emperor Theodosius.

<sup>69</sup> Proclus (412-485 A.D.), some of whose Neoplatonic books were read with interest in the Renaissance, was an implacable enemy of Christianity.

<sup>70</sup> Milton refers to the fourth Council of Carthage, which met in 398 A.D.



after the year 800, is observed already by Padre Paolo,<sup>71</sup> the great unmasker of the Trentine Council.<sup>72</sup> After which time the Popes of Rome, engrossing what they pleased of political rule into their own hands, extended their dominion over men's eyes, as they had before over their judgments, burning and prohibiting to be read what they fancied not; yet sparing in their censures, and the books not many which they so dealt with; till Martin V,<sup>73</sup> by his bull, not only prohibited, but was the first that excommunicated the reading of heretical books; for about that time Wyclif and Huss growing terrible, were they who first drove the Papal Court to a stricter policy of prohibiting. Which course Leo X<sup>74</sup> and his successors followed, until the Council of Trent and the Spanish Inquisition, engendering together, brought forth, or perfected those catalogues, and expurging indexes,<sup>75</sup> that rake through the entrails of many an old good author, with a violation worse than any could be offered to his tomb.

Nor did they stay in matters heretical, but any subject that was not to their palate, they either condemned in a prohibition, or had it straight into the new purgatory of an Index. To fill up the measure of encroachment, their last invention was to ordain that no book, pamphlet, or paper should be printed (as

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<sup>71</sup> Padre Paolo or Pietro Sarpi (1552–1623) was a leader in the challenge of the Venetians to the authority of the popes. Milton refers to his *History of the Council of Trent*, which was turned into English in 1620 by Nathaniel Brent. Hales points out that pp. 471–6 deal with the discussion of the Index Expurgatorius in that Council and are headed by a "Discourse of the Author concerning the Prohibition of Books." The discussion notes that "After the year 800 the popes of Rome, as they assumed a great part of the politick government, so they caused the Books, whose authors they did condemn, to be burned, and forbad the reading of them."

<sup>72</sup> The Council of Trent in the Tyrol met at frequent intervals between 13 December, 1545, and 4 December, 1563, and ended its efforts to reconcile Catholic and Protestant Europe by reaffirming most of the great positions and doctrines of Catholicism.

<sup>73</sup> Martin V (Otto Colonna) was Pope from 1417 to 1431. For his relation to Wycliffe and Huss see the Preface to *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, note 38, and *Church Government*, note 88.

<sup>74</sup> Leo X (Giovanni dei Medici) was Pope from 1513 to 1521.

<sup>75</sup> *expurging indexes: indices expurgatorii*. Cf. Introduction #55.

if St. Peter had bequeathed them the keys of the press also out of Paradise) unless it were approved and licensed under the hands of two or three glutton friars. For example:

Let the Chancellor Cini be pleased to see if in this present work be contained aught that may withstand the printing.

Vincent Rabbatta, Vicar of Florence.

I have seen this present work, and find nothing athwart the Catholic faith and good manners: in witness whereof I have given, &c.

Nicoló Cini, Chancellor of Florence.

Attending the precedent relation, it is allowed that this present work of Davanzati<sup>76</sup> may be printed.

Vincent Rabatta, &c.

It may be printed, July 15.

Friar Simon Mompei d'Amelia,

Chancellor of the holy office in Florence.

Sure they have a conceit, if he of the bottomless pit had not long since broke prison, that this quadruple exorcism would bar him down. I fear their next design will be to get into their custody the licensing of that which they say Claudius\* intended, but went not through with. Vouchsafe to see another of their forms, the Roman stamp:

Imprimatur, If it seem good to the reverend Master of the holy Palace,

Belcastro, Vicegerent.

Imprimatur,

Friar Nicoló Rodolphi,

Master of the holy Palace.

Sometimes five Imprimaturs are seen together, dialoguewise, in the piazza of one title-page, complimenting and ducking each to other with their shaven reverences, whether the author,

<sup>76</sup>The little book *On the English Schism* of Bernardo Davanzati Bostichi (1529-1606), a history of the events leading up to the break of the English Church from Rome under Henry VIII, is still an Italian classic.

\*In the Milton text the following was printed in the margin: *Quo veniam daret flatum crepitumque ventris in convivio emittendi. Sueton, in Claudio.*

who stands by in perplexity at the foot of his epistle, shall to the press or to the sponge. These are the pretty responsories,<sup>77</sup> these are the dear antiphonies<sup>78</sup> that so bewitched of late our prelates and their chaplains with the goodly echo they made; and besotted us to the gay imitation of a lordly *Imprimatur*,<sup>79</sup> one from Lambeth House,<sup>80</sup> another from the west end of Paul's,<sup>81</sup> so apishly Romanising that the word of command still was set down in Latin; as if the learned grammatical pen that wrote it would cast no ink without Latin; or perhaps, as they thought, because no vulgar tongue was worthy to express the pure conceit of an *Imprimatur*; but rather, as I hope, for that our English, the language of men ever famous and foremost in the achievements of liberty, will not easily find servile letters enow to spell such a dictatory presumption English.

And thus ye have the inventors and the original of book-licensing ripped up and drawn as lineally as any pedigree. We have it not, that can be heard of, from any ancient state, or polity, or church, nor by any statute left us by our ancestors elder or later; nor from the modern custom of any reformed city or church abroad; but from the most anti-christian council and the most tyrannous inquisition that ever inquired.

Till then books were ever as freely admitted into the world as any other birth; the issue of the brain was no more stifled than the issue of the womb; no envious Juno<sup>82</sup> sat cross-legged

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<sup>77</sup> *responsories*: sections of the Psalms sung interspersed between readings from the missal in the mass.

<sup>78</sup> *antiphonies*: hymns or anthems sung in responsive parts by two choirs.

<sup>79</sup> *Imprimatur*: "let it be printed," the order stamped on manuscripts which are permitted by ecclesiastical authority to be sent to the press. "To the sponge"—meaning, to have the contents wiped off—has been applied to manuscripts unworthy of publication since Suetonius helped to popularize the expression in the *Life of Augustus*, 2, 85.

<sup>80</sup> *Lambeth House*: Lambeth Palace, still the official residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury on the south bank of the Thames, in Southwark, London.

<sup>81</sup> *Paul's*: St. Paul's Cathedral in London, the headquarters of the Bishop of London, who traditionally took a leading part in the licensing of books. Cf. Introduction #56.

<sup>82</sup> In *Metamorphoses* IX, 285-319, Ovid tells the story of Juno's cruelty to Alcmena in placing the goddess of childbirth cross-legged beside her,

over the nativity of any man's intellectual offspring; but if it proved a monster, who denies but that it was justly burnt, or sunk into the sea. But that a book, in worse condition than a peccant soul, should be to stand before a jury ere it be born to the world, and undergo yet in darkness the judgment of Radamant<sup>83</sup> and his colleagues, ere it can pass the ferry backward into light, was never heard before, till that mysterious iniquity, provoked and troubled at the first entrance of reformation, sought out new limbos<sup>84</sup> and new hells wherein they might include our books also within the number of their damned. And this was the rare morsel so officiously snatched up, and so ill-favoredly imitated by our inquisiturient bishops, and the attendant minorites,<sup>85</sup> their chaplains. That ye like not now these most certain authors of this licensing order, and that all sinister intention was far distant from your thoughts, when ye were importuned the passing it, all men who know the integrity of your actions, and how ye honor truth, will clear ye readily.

But some will say, what though the inventors were bad, the thing for all that may be good. It may so; yet if that thing be no such deep invention, but obvious and easy for any man to light on, and yet best and wisest commonwealths through all

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muttering charms to prevent her delivery of the infant Hercules. On the seventh night of labor the wit of Alcmena's maid tricked the cross-legged goddess into rising and so breaking the charm that closed her mistress's womb.

<sup>83</sup> Rhadamanthus, a legendary king of Crete, was appointed by Zeus to judge the souls of the dead, together with Minos and Aeacus, stripping every soul naked of every corporal covering so as to look it through and through. So Plato in *Gorgias*, 524a.

<sup>84</sup> *limbos*: regions adjoining hell, such as the *limbus puerorum*, or limbo of babes, and *limbus patrum*, or limbo of the patriarchs who were delivered after the crucifixion, when Christ harrowed hell. Milton alludes to the charge which Jeremy Taylor repeated in his *Dissuasive from Popery*, Part II, Chapter vi, "Of the Expurgatory Indices in the Roman Church," viz.: "1. That the king of Spain gave a commission to the inquisitors to purge all catholic authors, but with a clause of secrecy. 2. That they purged the indices of the fathers' works. 3. That they did also purge the works of the fathers themselves." *Works*, Edition of 1828, Vol. X, p. 495.

<sup>85</sup> *minorites*: Franciscans, who had been known in England, from their grey habits, as Grey Friars. They were traditionally the humblest of all the monastic orders.

ages and occasions have forborne to use it, and falsest seducers and oppressors of men were the first who took it up, and to no other purpose but to obstruct and hinder the first approach of reformation; I am of those who believe it will be a harder alchymy than Lullius<sup>86</sup> ever knew to sublimate<sup>87</sup> any good use out of such an invention. Yet this only is what I request to gain from this reason, that it may be held a dangerous and suspicious fruit, as certainly it deserves, for the tree that bore it, until I can dissect one by one the properties it has. But I have first to finish, as was propounded, what is to be thought in general of reading books, whatever sort they be, and whether be more the benefit or the harm that thence proceeds?

Not to insist upon the examples of Moses,<sup>88</sup> Daniel, and Paul,<sup>89</sup> who were skilful in all the learning of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Greeks, which could not probably be without reading their books of all sorts; in Paul especially, who thought it no defilement to insert into Holy Scripture the sentences of three Greek poets, and one of them a tragedian; the question was notwithstanding sometimes controverted among the primitive doctors, but with great odds on that side which affirmed it both lawful and profitable, as was then evidently perceived when Julian the Apostate<sup>90</sup> and subtlest enemy to our faith,

<sup>86</sup> *Lullius*: Raymond Lully (1234?-1315) was traditionally better known for his writings on alchemy and medicine than he was for the missionary ardor that took him to north Africa three times and finally ended his life by martyrdom in Mauretania.

<sup>87</sup> *sublimate*: in alchemy, to transform a base into a precious metal. Cf. *P.L.* V, 483.

<sup>88</sup> In Acts vii, 22, Moses is called "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and in Daniel i, 17, Daniel is described as seemingly more learned than any of the other Hebrew princes who were educated in the wisdom of Chaldea. St. Paul's learning was got partly under the great Hebrew teacher Gamaliel (Acts xxii, 3), but it also included the knowledge of Greek literature of which Milton would remember that he made effective use in Athens. (Acts xvii, 28.)

<sup>89</sup> Acts xvii, 28, represents St. Paul as quoting Aratus (cf. Introduction #9); I Corinthians xv, 33—"evil communications corrupt good manners"—is an allusion to a fragment of Euripides; and Titus i, 12—"the Cretans are always liars"—is attributed to the early sixth century Cretan poet, Epimenides.

<sup>90</sup> Julian the Apostate (Flavius Claudius Julianus, 331-363 A.D.) became emperor in 361 and was killed by the Persians two years later.

made a decree forbidding Christians the study of heathen learning; for, said he, they wound us with our own weapons, and with our own arts and sciences they overcome us. And, indeed, the Christians were put so to their shifts by this crafty means, and so much in danger to decline into all ignorance, that the two Apollinarii<sup>91</sup> were fain, as a man may say, to coin all the seven liberal sciences<sup>92</sup> out of the Bible, reducing it into divers forms of orations, poems, dialogues, even to the calculating of a new Christian grammar. But, saith the historian Socrates, the providence of God provided better than the industry of Apollinarius and his son, by taking away that illiterate law with the life of him who devised it.<sup>93</sup>

So great an injury they then held it to be deprived of Hellenic learning; and thought it a persecution more undermining, and secretly decaying the Church, than the open cruelty of Decius<sup>94</sup> or Diocletian.<sup>95</sup> And perhaps it was the same politic drift that the devil whipped St. Jerome<sup>96</sup> in a Lenten dream, for reading Cicero; or else it was a phantasm bred by the fever

Though trained as a Christian, he seems to have been attracted early by pagan thought, and he publicly apostatized and made his famous decree against *teaching* pagan literature by the Christians when he became emperor.

<sup>91</sup> The *Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates Scholasticus (385?-440? A.D.), Book III, chapter xiv, recounts that when "the Emperour Iulian forbad the Christians the studie of Prophane literature, both the Apollinariuses, the father, and the sonne, fell a writing. . . . For the father . . . turned the five bookes of *Moses* into Heroicall verse, together with other bookes of the old Testament, which contained Histories: partly in Hexameter verse, & partly after the forme of comedies and tragedies. . . . The son (who became bishop of Alexandria), an eloquent Rhetorician, brought the writings of the Euangelistes, and works of the Apostles, into Dialogues, as *Plato* used among the Heathens." (Hanmer's translation, 1585, p. 307.)

<sup>92</sup> *the seven liberal sciences*: Cf. *Of Education*, note 13.

<sup>93</sup> Socrates' eighteenth chapter tells the story of Julian's perhaps providential taking-off in battle with the Persians, and chapter nineteen celebrates the restoration of full cultural rights to the Christians by his Christian successor, Jovian.

<sup>94</sup> Decius was emperor from 249 until 251.

<sup>95</sup> The persecutions under Decius and Dioclesian, who reigned from 284 to 305, were particularly severe.

<sup>96</sup> The story of St. Jerome's dream of being brought by an angel before a tribunal in heaven and accused of being a Ciceronian because he had

which had then seized him. For had an angel been his discipliner, unless it were for dwelling too much upon Ciceronianisms, and had chastised the reading, not the vanity, it had been plainly partial; first to correct him for grave Cicero, and not for scurril Plautus, whom he confesses to have been reading not long before; next to correct him only, and let so many more ancient fathers wax old in those pleasant and florid studies without the lash of such a tutoring apparition; insomuch that Basil<sup>97</sup> teaches how some good use may be made of *Margites*, a sportful poem not now extant writ by Homer; and why not then of *Morgante*,<sup>98</sup> an Italian romance much to the same purpose?

But if it be agreed we shall be tried by visions, there is a vision recorded by Eusebius,<sup>99</sup> far ancients than this tale of Jerome to the nun Eustochium, and, besides, has nothing of a fever in it. Dionysius Alexandrinus was, about the year 240, a person of great name in the church for piety and learning, who had wont to avail himself much against heretics by being conversant in their books; until a certain presbyter laid it scrupulously to his conscience, how he durst venture himself among

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Cicero's works by heart, goes back to Jerome's *Epistle* XVIII, "To Eustochius on Virginity." Milton's interpretation of it goes back as far as Gratian's *Decretum*, Prima Pars, Distinctio XXXVII, vii, where the saint is said to have replied to his heavenly judge by asking whether clergymen ought not to have skill in secular literature.

<sup>97</sup> Basil the Great, who was Bishop of Cappadocia from 370 to 379, is described in Socrates' *History* IV, xxi, as spending his youth at Athens in the study of pagan literature and philosophy, seemingly in order to dedicate his knowledge to his life's work as a controversialist.

<sup>98</sup> The mock-heroic romance of Luigi Pulci (1431-1487), the *Morgante Maggiore* (published in 1488), was coarser than Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, of which it was one of the main sources of inspiration. As Homer's *Margites* was traditionally regarded as the first great humorous poem in the ancient world, the *Morgante* was accepted as having founded its type in Renaissance Europe.

<sup>99</sup> Milton quoted loosely from the summary of Dionysius' (Bishop of Alexandria, 247-65) letter to Philemon in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* VII, vi, confessing that he had "read over the traditions and commentaries of the heretickes" because a vision had commanded him to "Reade all whatsoever come into thy handes; thou shalt be able to weye, to prove, and trye all." (Meredith Hanmer's translation, p. 127.) For Eusebius cf. Introduction #25.

those defiling volumes. The worthy man, loth to give offence, fell into a new debate with himself what was to be thought; when suddenly a vision sent from God (it is his own *Epistle* that so avers it) confirmed him in these words: "Read any books whatever come to thy hands, for thou art sufficient both to judge aright and to examine each matter." To this revelation he assented the sooner, as he confesses, because it was answerable to that of the Apostle to the Thessalonians: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."<sup>100</sup>

And he might have added another remarkable saying of the same author: "To the pure, all things are pure";<sup>101</sup> not only meats and drinks, but all kind of knowledge whether of good or evil; the knowledge cannot defile, nor consequently the books, if the will and conscience be not defiled. For books are as meats and viands are—some of good, some of evil substance, and yet God in that unapocryphal vision said without exception, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat,"<sup>102</sup> leaving the choice to each man's discretion. Wholesome meats to a vitiated stomach differ little or nothing from unwholesome, and best books to a naughty mind are not unapplicable to occasions of evil. Bad meats will scarce breed good nourishment in the healthiest concoction; but herein the difference is of bad books, that they to a discreet and judicious reader serve in many respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn, and to illustrate.

Whereof what better witness can ye expect I should produce than one of your own now sitting in Parliament, the chief of learned men reputed in this land, Mr. Selden,<sup>103</sup> whose volume

<sup>100</sup> I Thessalonians v, 21.

<sup>101</sup> Titus i, 15.

<sup>102</sup> "Are not all the *Nations* of the *Earth* alike cleane unto *God*," wrote Roger Williams in *The Bloudie Tenent*, p. 186, "or rather, alike uncleane, until it pleaseth the *Father* of *Mercies* to call some out to the *Knowledge* and *Grace* of his *Sonne*? . . . This taking away the difference between *Nation* and *Nation*, *Country* and *Country*, is most fully and admirably declared in that vision of all sorts of living creatures presented unto *Peter*, Acts, 10, whereby it pleased the *Lord* to inform *Peter* of the abolishing of the difference between *Jew* and *Gentile*. . . ." Cf. Introduction #61.

<sup>103</sup> John Selden (1584-1654) had published his *De Jure Naturali et Gentium* in 1640. Cf. Introduction #41, 81, and 86.



of natural and national laws proves, not only by great authorities brought together, but by exquisite reasons and theorems almost mathematically demonstrative, that all opinions, yea errors, known, read, and collated, are of main service and assistance toward the speedy attainment of what is truest.

I conceive, therefore, that when God did enlarge the universal diet of man's body, saving ever the rules of temperance, he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dieting and repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his own leading capacity. How great a virtue is temperance,<sup>104</sup> how much of moment through the whole life of man! Yet God commits the managing so great a trust, without particular law or prescription, wholly to the demeanor of every grown man. And therefore, when he himself tabled the Jews from heaven, that omer,<sup>105</sup> which was every man's daily portion of manna, is computed to have been more than might have well sufficed the heartiest feeder thrice as many meals. For those actions which enter into a man, rather than issue out of him, and therefore defile not, God uses not to captivate under a perpetual childhood of prescription, but trusts him with the gift of reason to be his own chooser; there were but little work left for preaching, if law and compulsion should grow so fast upon those things which heretofore were governed only by exhortation. Solomon<sup>106</sup> informs us that much reading is a weariness to the flesh; but neither he nor other inspired author tells us that such or such reading is unlawful; yet certainly had God thought good to limit us herein, it had been much more expedient to have told us what was unlawful, than what was wearisome.

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<sup>104</sup> Cf. Michael's urging of

The rule of *not too much*, by temperance taught  
In what thou eat'st and drink'st . . .

on Adam in *P.L.* XI, 531-2.

<sup>105</sup> The *omer* was the measure of manna which Moses was commanded in Exodus xvi, 16, to ration to the Israelites daily. The account lays stress on the abundance of the supply.

<sup>106</sup> Ecclesiastes xii, 12. Mark vii, 15: "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man."

As for the burning of those Ephesian books by St. Paul's converts;<sup>107</sup> 'tis replied the books were magic, the Syriac so renders them. It was a private act, a voluntary act, and leaves us to a voluntary imitation: the men in remorse burnt those books which were their own; the magistrate by this example is not appointed; these men practised the books, another might perhaps have read them in some sort usefully.

Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed upon Psyche<sup>108</sup> as an incessant labor to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixed. It was from out the rind of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evil, as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world. And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say, of knowing good by evil.<sup>109</sup>

As therefore the state of man now is, what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring<sup>110</sup> Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and

<sup>107</sup> The story is found in Acts xix, 19. Cf. Introduction #104.

<sup>108</sup> Milton would know the story of Psyche best in *The Golden Ass* of Aupleius IV-VI. Anger because Psyche has won Cupid's love makes Venus doom her to sort the various kinds of grain out of a vast, mixed pile, but the work is done for her by the sympathetic ants.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Introduction #110-11. Cf. *P.L.* IX, 107-72.

<sup>110</sup> *wayfaring*, the reading of the first edition, has the weight of priority, but *warfaring* is suggested by the fact that the entire passage seems to echo Lactantius' repeated stress in *Institutes* III, xxix; V, vii; and VI, *passim* upon a Christian ethic "ex quo fit ut virtus nulla sit, si *adversarius* desit." (See Miss K. Hartwell, *Milton and Lactantius*, pp. 21-35, for Milton's echo of the Lactantian passages in his *Commonplace Book* and for the relation of Lactantius to Seneca's *De Ira*.) In the background is St. Paul's Christian soldier in Ephesians vi, a conception popularized by Erasmus' *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* and by Puritan books like John Downname's *The Christian Warfare*, which went into four editions from 1604 to 1618. In

cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland<sup>111</sup> is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather:<sup>112</sup> that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank<sup>113</sup> virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental<sup>114</sup> whiteness; which was the reason why our sage and serious poet Spenser,<sup>115</sup> whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus<sup>116</sup> or Aquinas,<sup>117</sup> describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him in with

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three extant copies of the first edition of *Areopagitica* the "y" in *Wayfaring* is changed to "r" in a hand that may be Milton's.

<sup>111</sup> *that*: like the Latin *ille*, the word is used to refer to something well known. Milton is perhaps thinking of that prize for which St. Paul described himself as pressing forward in Philippians iii, 14, or of the crown of righteousness in II Timothy iv, 8, or of the crown of life that is promised in James i, 12, to him "that endureth temptation" and "is tried." Cf. *Tenure*, note 50.

<sup>112</sup> In *Christian Doctrine* I, xi, Milton's belief in the doctrine of original sin is explicit. It is "common to all men" and is "that which our first parents, and in them all their posterity committed."

<sup>113</sup> *blank*: pale or colorless. Cf. its force in *P.L.* III, 48: "a universal blank Of nature's works," where the substantial meaning is the darkness or indiscriminate grayness of the blind Milton's world.

<sup>114</sup> *excremental*: excremental, external.

<sup>115</sup> The influence of Spenser's allegory of the Cave of Mammon in *The Faerie Queene* II, viii, and still more of his Circean allegory in the bower of bliss in II, xii, upon Milton's imagination is evident throughout *Comus*, particularly in lines 436, 515-9, and 651-2.

<sup>116</sup> John Duns Scotus (1265?-1308), the Subtle Doctor in the Scholastic tradition, was born in Scotland but taught at Paris and Oxford and died in Cologne. He was a Franciscan, and in several important ways his teaching was opposed to that of his great Dominican predecessor, St. Thomas. The prejudice against Scholastic logic which Milton illustrates here was responsible for the quite unfair development of the word *dunce* from Duns Scotus' name. Cf. Butler's description of an ignorant Puritan parson as

"another Dunce,  
Profound in all the nominal  
And real ways, beyond them all;  
For he a rope of sand could twist  
As tough as learned Sorbonist;

his palmer through the cave of Mammon and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know, and yet abstain.

Since therefore, the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with less danger, scout into the regions of sin and falsity, than by reading all manner of tractates and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read.

But of the harm that may result hence, three kinds are usually reckoned. First is feared the infection that may spread; but then all human learning and controversy in religious points must remove out of the world, yea the Bible itself; for that oftentimes relates blasphemy not nicely,<sup>118</sup> it describes the carnal sense of wicked men not unelegantly, it brings in holiest men passionately murmuring against providence through all the arguments of Epicurus;<sup>119</sup> in other great disputes it answers dubiously and darkly to the common reader; and ask a Talmudist<sup>120</sup> what ails the modesty of his marginal Keri,<sup>121</sup> that Moses and all the prophets cannot persuade him to pronounce the textual Chetiv. For these causes we all know the Bible itself put by the Papist into the first

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And weave fine cobwebs fit for skull  
That's empty when the moon is full."

(*Hudibras* I, 154-60. Quoted by Hales.)

<sup>117</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas (1225?-1274), the Seraphic Doctor, in his *Summa Theologiae* left the greatest monument of Scholastic thought, and in his *Summa contra Gentiles*, the greatest medieval compendium of Christian doctrine.

<sup>118</sup> *nicely*: delicately.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, note 221. Solomon's thought in Ecclesiastes was often compared with Epicurus' qualified advice to "eat, drink, and be merry."

<sup>120</sup> *Talmudist*: a scholar in the oral tradition which grew up about the Books of Moses and codified their legal and ritualistic elements.

<sup>121</sup> *Keri*: what is read, opposed to *Chetiv*: what is written. Milton explains the terms when he says in the *Apology* that "rabbinical scholiasts, not well attending, have often used to blur the margin with Keri instead of Ketiv, and gave us this insulse rule out of their Talmud, 'That all words which in the law are written obscenely, must be changed to more civil words:' fools, who would teach men to read more decently than God thought fit to write." *C.E.* III, 316.

rank of prohibited books. The ancientest fathers must be next removed, as Clement of Alexandria,<sup>122</sup> and that Eusebian<sup>123</sup> book of Evangelic preparation transmitting our ears through a hoard of heathenish obscenities to receive the Gospel. Who finds not that Irenæus,<sup>124</sup> Epiphanius,<sup>125</sup> Jerome,<sup>126</sup> and others discover more heresies than they well confute, and that oft for heresy which is the truer opinion?

Nor boots it to say for these and all the heathen writers of greatest infection, if it must be thought so, with whom is bound up the life of human learning, that they writ in an unknown tongue, so long as we are sure those languages are known as well to the worst of men, who are both most able and most diligent to instil the poison they suck, first into the courts of princes, acquainting them with the choicest delights, and criticisms of sin.<sup>127</sup> As perhaps did that Petronius<sup>128</sup> whom Nero called his Arbiter, the master of his revels; and

<sup>122</sup> Clement of Alexandria (?150–? A.D.) was the first of the great Fathers of the Church to bring an intimate knowledge of Greek philosophy and religion to the enrichment as well as the defense of Christianity.

<sup>123</sup> Eusebius' *Preparatio Evangelica* is well described by Milton's words in the text. Many patristic books exhibited the worst features of pagan thought and religious practice to turn their readers to Christianity. Cf. Introduction #25.

<sup>124</sup> Irenæus (140?–202? A.D.) became Bishop of Lyons in 177. He wrote *Against Heresies* to combat Gnosticism.

<sup>125</sup> Milton may have been interested in the *Panarion* or general refutation of heresies which was written by Epiphanius (315–403), who became Bishop of Constantia in Cyprus in 367. He was certainly familiar with Socrates' story in the *Ecclesiastical History* VI, ix and xiii, of Epiphanius' quarrel with John, Bishop of Constantinople, and of his seeming prostitution of his position as a controversialist in a struggle for power. He died at sea on his way home from Constantinople, in fulfilment, Socrates suggests, of John's curse upon him. His position in the Arian controversy once led one of his opponents to charge "that he thought of God basely and abjectly, attributing to him the forme or shape of man"—a fact that would certainly have interested Milton. Cf. Introduction #108.

<sup>126</sup> For Jerome see Introduction #25.

<sup>127</sup> *criticisms*: critical refinements—here of an elegant connoisseur of the pleasures of vice.

<sup>128</sup> Gaius Petronius was called by Tacitus (*Annals* XVI, xvii) *arbiter elegantiarum* or a kind of unofficial director of entertainments at the court of the emperor Nero. Milton was thinking of the witty indecencies of the famous surviving fragment of his *Satiricon*, known as *Trimalchio's Dinner*.

that notorious ribald of Arezzo,<sup>129</sup> dreaded and yet dear to the Italian courtiers. I name not him for posterity's sake, whom Harry VIII named in merriment his Vicar of hell.<sup>130</sup> By which compendious way all the contagion that foreign books can infuse, will find a passage to the people far easier and shorter than an Indian voyage, though it could be sailed either by the north of Cathay<sup>131</sup> eastward, or of Canada westward, while our Spanish licensing gags the English press never so severely.

But, on the other side, that infection which is from books of controversy in religion, is more doubtful and dangerous to the learned than to the ignorant; and yet those books must be permitted untouched by the licenser. It will be hard to instance where any ignorant man hath been ever seduced by papistical book in English, unless it were commended and expounded to him by some of that clergy; and indeed all such tractates, whether false or true, are as the prophecy of Isaiah was to the eunuch, "not to be understood without a guide."<sup>132</sup> But of our priests and doctors how many have been corrupted by studying the comments of Jesuits and Sorbonists,<sup>133</sup> and

<sup>129</sup> Pietro Aretino (1492-1557), by practicing a kind of magnificent literary blackmail and by exploiting the aristocratic taste for indecency, achieved banishment from Rome as well as from Arezzo, won a European reputation, and left some revealing records of his times behind him.

<sup>130</sup> The allusion seems to be to the very minor poet Sir Francis Brian, to whom Thomas Cromwell repeatedly referred as "the Vicar of Hell." It was, says Roger B. Merriman in his edition of *The Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, Oxford, 1902, Vol. II, p. 296, "a popular nickname for Sir Francis Brian," and presumably was bestowed for his cynical betrayal of his cousin, Anne Boleyn, when Henry VIII's suspicions were first aroused against her.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Milton's interest in the contemporary efforts to find a northeast sea route to China (*Cathay*) in his simile of the storms and ice packs

that stop the imagined way  
Beyond Petsora eastward to the rich  
Cathaian coast.

(P.L. X, 291-3.)

<sup>132</sup> Cf. the Apostle Philip's conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch by interpreting Isaiah to him. (Acts viii, 28-35.)

<sup>133</sup> The school which Robert de Sorbon founded for poor students at the University of Paris in 1252 soon gave its name to the entire institution, which was the center of Scholastic teaching for four centuries. In the *First Defence* Milton calls it a "college devoted to the Romish religion,

how fast they could transfuse that corruption into the people, our experience is both late and sad. It is not forgot, since the acute and distinct Arminius<sup>134</sup> was perverted merely by the perusing of a nameless discourse written at Delft, which at first he took in hand to confute.

Seeing, therefore, that those books, and those in great abundance, which are likeliest to taint both life and doctrine, cannot be suppressed without the fall of learning, and of all ability in disputation; and that these books of either sort are most and soonest catching to the learned, from whom to the common people whatever is heretical or dissolute may quickly be conveyed; and that evil manners are as perfectly learned without books a thousand other ways which cannot be stopped; and evil doctrine not with books can propagate, except a teacher guide, which he might also do without writing, and so beyond prohibiting: I am not able to unfold how this cautelous<sup>135</sup> enterprise of licensing can be exempted from the number of vain and impossible attempts. And he who were pleasantly disposed, could not well avoid to liken it to the exploit of that gallant man who thought to pound up the crows by shutting his park gate.

Besides another inconvenience, if learned men be the first receivers out of books and dispreaders both of vice and error, how shall the licensers themselves be confided in, unless we can confer upon them, or they assume to themselves above all others in the land, the grace of infallibility and uncorruptedness? And again, if it be true that a wise man, like a good

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and consequently of but very weak authority among Protestants." (C.E. VII, 203.)

<sup>134</sup> The allusion to Arminius (1560–1609), the Dutch opponent of the extreme Calvinistic belief about Predestination, in *Doctrine and Discipline* II, iii, shows that Milton was hardly in sympathy with him at this time. Cf. Introduction #45–7 and 102–3. Arminius was Professor of Theology at Leyden, and was said to have been persuaded against Calvin's position by the writing of one or more obscure Dutch clergymen to whom he was asked, in his official capacity, to reply.

<sup>135</sup> *cautelous*: tricky. Cf. Shakespeare:

Swear priests and cowards and men cautelous, . . .  
That welcome wrongs.

*Julius Caesar*, II, I, 129–131

refiner, can gather gold out of the drossiest volume, and that a fool will be a fool with the best book, yea or without book, there is no reason that we should deprive a wise man of any advantage to his wisdom, while we seek to restrain from a fool that which being restrained will be no hindrance to his folly. For if there should be so much exactness always used to keep that from him which is unfit for his reading, we should, in the judgment of Aristotle<sup>136</sup> not only, but of Solomon<sup>137</sup> and of our Saviour,<sup>138</sup> not vouchsafe him good precepts, and by consequence not willingly admit him to good books; as being certain that a wise man will make better use of an idle pamphlet than a fool will do of sacred Scripture.

'Tis next alleged we must not expose ourselves to temptations without necessity, and, next to that, not employ our time in vain things. To both these objections one answer will serve, out of the grounds already laid; that to all men such books are not temptations nor vanities, but useful drugs and materials wherewith to temper and compose effective and strong medicines which man's life cannot want.<sup>139</sup> The rest, as children and childish men, who have not the art to qualify<sup>140</sup> and prepare these working minerals, well may be exhorted to forbear, but hindered forcibly they cannot be by all the licensing that sainted Inquisition could ever contrive. Which is what I promised to deliver next: that this order of licensing conduces nothing to the end for which it was framed; and hath almost prevented<sup>141</sup> me by being clear already, while thus much hath been explaining. See the ingenuity<sup>142</sup> of Truth, who, when

<sup>136</sup> In the *Nicomachean Ethics* X, viii, 3, Aristotle acknowledges, in closing his great work, that discourses on ethics have no effect on ordinary mankind and can inspire virtue only in men of generous temperament.

<sup>137</sup> "Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth." (Prov. xvii, 24.)

<sup>138</sup> "Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." (Matt. vii, 6.)

<sup>139</sup> *want*: do without, lack.

<sup>140</sup> *qualify*: fix the quality or nature of a drug by proper compounding.

<sup>141</sup> *prevented*: anticipated or "got ahead of" another person in arriving somewhere, or—as here—in doing something. The modern French *prevenir* preserves this meaning.

<sup>142</sup> *ingenuity*: ingenuousness, liberality.



she gets a free and willing hand, opens herself faster than the pace of method and discourse can overtake her.

It was the task which I began with, to show that no nation, or well instituted state, if they valued books at all, did ever use this way of licensing; and it might be answered, that this is a piece of prudence lately discovered. To which I return, that as it was a thing slight and obvious to think on, so if it had been difficult to find out, there wanted not among them long since who suggested such a course; which they not following, leave us a pattern of their judgment that it was not the not knowing, but the not approving, which was the cause of their not using it.

Plato,<sup>143</sup> a man of high authority indeed, but least of all for his commonwealth, in the book of his laws, which no city ever yet received, fed his fancy with making many edicts to his airy burgomasters, which they who otherwise admire him, wish had been rather buried and excused in the genial cups of an Academic night-sitting.<sup>144</sup> By which laws he seems to tolerate no kind of learning, but by unalterable decree, consisting most of practical traditions, to the attainment whereof a library of smaller bulk than his own dialogues would be abundant. And there also enacts that no poet should so much as read to any private man what he had written, until the judges and law-keepers had seen it and allowed it;<sup>145</sup> but that Plato meant

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<sup>143</sup> Mr. Herbert Agar points out (*Milton and Plato*, p. 59) that, "except for the fact that Milton does not approve of censoring any reasonable form of art, his own attitude towards music was very similar to that of Plato." The reminiscences of the *Laws* in *Church Government* indicate a strong interest in the work as practically important there. Here Milton is really anticipating the objection to his own position of Puritans who cited Plato's severity to poets and musicians in the *Republic* and *Laws* in defense of a narrow intolerance, and he replies as Sidney did in *An Apology for Poetry*, by pointing out that Plato was an incorrigible poet himself. Cf. *On the Platonic Idea*, 35-9.

<sup>144</sup> i.e., forgotten, after being tossed out for discussion by Plato's friends at some unrecorded symposium in the Academy.

<sup>145</sup> Miss Lockwood quotes *Laws* VII, 801: "Shall we make a law that the poet shall compose nothing contrary to the ideas of the lawful, or just, or beautiful, or good, which are allowed in the state? nor shall he be permitted to show his compositions to any private individuals, until he

this law peculiarly to that commonwealth which he had imagined, and to no other, is evident. Why was he not else a law-giver to himself, but a transgressor, and to be expelled by his own magistrates; both for the wanton epigrams and dialogues which he made, and his perpetual reading of Sophron<sup>146</sup> Mimus, and Aristophanes, books of grossest infamy; and also for commending the latter of them, though he were the malicious libeller of his chief friends, to be read by the tyrant Dionysius,<sup>147</sup> who had little need of such trash to spend his time on? But that he knew this licensing of poems had reference and dependence to many other provisos there set down in his fancied republic, which in this world could have no place; and so neither he himself, nor any magistrate, or city ever imitated that course, which, taken apart from those other collateral injunctions, must needs be vain and fruitless.

For if they fell upon one kind of strictness, unless their care were equal to regulate all other things of like aptness to corrupt the mind, that single endeavor they knew would be but a fond labor;<sup>148</sup> to shut and fortify one gate against corruption, and be necessitated to leave others round about wide open. If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No music must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric.<sup>149</sup> There must be licensing dancers,

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shall have shown them to the appointed judges, . . . and they are satisfied with them."

<sup>146</sup> Milton thought of such epigrams as that attributed to Plato in the Third Book of Diogenes Laertius and translated by Shelley as "Kissing Helena";

Kissing Helena together

With my kiss, my soul beside it

Came to my lips, and there I kept it, . . .

The mimes or realistic dramatic sketches of Sophron (c460-420 B.C.), according to Diogenes Laertius, were enough admired by Plato to justify Milton's statement in *An Apology for Smectymnuus* (C.E. III, 293) that he took "them nightly to read on and after to make them his pillow."

<sup>147</sup> For the story about Dionysius see note 39 above.

<sup>148</sup> *fond*: ineffective, foolish.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Roger Ascham's praise of that "kinde of Musicke inuented by the Dorians," because both Plato and Aristotle thought "it to be verie fyt for the studie of vertue & learning, because of a manlye, rough and stoute

that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth, but what by their allowance shall be thought honest;<sup>150</sup> for such Plato was provided of.<sup>151</sup> It will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers? The windows also, and the balconies must be thought on; there are shrewd<sup>152</sup> books, with dangerous frontispieces,<sup>153</sup> set to sale; who shall prohibit them? Shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors<sup>154</sup> to inquire what lectures<sup>155</sup> the bagpipe and the rebeck<sup>156</sup> reads even to the ballatry,<sup>157</sup> and the gamut of every municipal fiddler, for these are the countryman's Arcadias,<sup>158</sup> and his Monte Mayors.

Next, what more national corruption, for which England

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sounde in it, whyche shulde encourage yong stomakes, to attempte manlye matters." Ascham recalled also that "they both agre, that [that] Musike vsed amonges the Lydians is verie ill for yong men." (Ascham's *English Works*, edited by W. A. Wright, Cambridge, 1904, p. 12.) Cf. *P.L.* I, 550.

<sup>150</sup> *honest*: honorable, decent.

<sup>151</sup> The passage in the *Laws* (800-802) which Milton has in mind provides that a selection from the countless existing songs of the Greeks shall be made by mature judges—men not under fifty—to make sure that the ideal city for which he is legislating shall have no music or poetry which does not rightly praise the gods and the great dead.

<sup>152</sup> *shrewd*: mischievous, wicked.

<sup>153</sup> *frontispieces*: fronts or decorated pages at the beginning. The word (from medieval Latin *frontispicium*) meant primarily the facade of a building, as in *P.L.* III, 506.

<sup>154</sup> *visitors*: inspectors. The term was hateful because it was applied to the officials whom Archbishop Laud had sent throughout England to see that parish clergy conformed to his regulation of the services.

<sup>155</sup> *lectures*: addresses, particularly of the kind that were popular among the Puritans and were forbidden or discouraged by the bishops.

<sup>156</sup> *rebeck*: a simple fiddle, originally with only two strings. Cf. *E. Allegro*, 94.

<sup>157</sup> *ballatry*: balladry. Such stuff as Autolycus exhibits in *A Winter's Tale* IV, iv, 262-330.

<sup>158</sup> Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, and perhaps also that of the Italian, Sannazaro, and the *Diana Enamorada* of the Portuguese, Jorge de Montemayor (1520?-1561).

hears ill<sup>159</sup> abroad, than household gluttony?<sup>160</sup> Who shall be the rectors of our daily rioting? And what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those houses where drunkenness is sold and harbored? Our garments also should be referred to the licensing of some more sober workmasters, to see them cut into a less wanton garb. Who shall regulate all the mixed conversation<sup>161</sup> of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this country? Who shall still appoint what shall be discoursed, what presumed, and no further? Lastly, who shall forbid and separate all idle resort, all evil company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be least hurtful, how least enticing, herein consists the grave and governing wisdom of a state.

To sequester out of the world into Atlantic and Utopian<sup>162</sup> polities, which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evil, in the midst whereof God hath placed us unavoidably. Nor is it Plato's licensing of books will do this, which necessarily pulls along with it so many other kinds of licensing as will make us all both ridiculous and weary, and yet frustrate; but those unwritten, or at least unconstraining, laws of virtuous education, religious and civil nurture, which Plato there mentions as the bonds and ligaments of the commonwealth,<sup>163</sup> the pillars and the sustainers of every written statute; these they be which will bear chief sway in such matters as these, when all licensing

<sup>159</sup> *hears ill*: hears unfavorably mentioned. The idiom is Greek.

<sup>160</sup> Evidence of absurd excesses in food and drink in the reigns of James I and Charles I abounds; e.g., Peacham's condemnation of "our Feastmakers, who suppose the glory of entertainment and giving the best welcome, to consist in needlesse superfluities and profuse waste of the good Creatures, as *Scylla* made a banquet that lasted many daies, where there was such excessive abundance, that infinite plentie of victuals were throwne into the River." (*Compleat Gentleman*, p. 228).

<sup>161</sup> *conversation*: social intercourse.

<sup>162</sup> As he has condemned the strict social regulation of Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, Milton now objects to the same aspect of the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More and of Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*. To "sequester" one's self in such speculative commonwealths is mere escapism.

<sup>163</sup> Milton is thinking of the passage in the *Republic* IV, 424-33, where Plato makes sound education the basis of social order.

will be easily eluded. Impunity and remissness, for certain, are the bane of a commonwealth; but here the great art lies, to discern in what the law is to bid restraint and punishment, and in what things persuasion only is to work. If every action which is good or evil in man at ripe years, were to be under pittance<sup>164</sup> and prescription and compulsion, what were virtue but a name, what praise could be then due to well-doing, what gramercy<sup>165</sup> to be sober, just, or continent?

Many there be that complain of divine Providence for suffering Adam to transgress. Foolish tongues! when God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing;<sup>166</sup> he had been else a mere artificial Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions.<sup>167</sup> We ourselves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force. God, therefore, left him free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did he create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly tempered are the very ingredients of virtue? They are not skilful considerers of human things, who imagine to remove sin by removing the matter of sin. For, besides that it is a huge heap increasing under the very act of diminishing, though some part of it may for a time be withdrawn from some persons, it cannot from all, in such a universal thing as books are; and when this is done, yet the sin remains entire. Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure, he has yet one jewel left—ye cannot bereave him of his covetousness. Banish all objects of lust, shut up all youth into the severest discipline that can be exercised in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chaste, that came not thither so: such great care and wisdom is required to the right managing of this point.

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<sup>164</sup> *pittance*: ration, allowance. Originally, the word was applied to a monk's portion of food.

<sup>165</sup> *gramercy*: thanks.

<sup>166</sup> Milton put this definition dogmatically because he expected his readers to recognize it as Aristotle's in the *Nicomachean Ethics* III, ii, 6. Cf. Introduction #73-4.

<sup>167</sup> *motions*: puppet shows.

Suppose we could expel sin by this means; look how much we thus expel of sin, so much we expel of virtue: for the matter of them both is the same; remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This justifies the high providence of God, who, though he command us temperance, justice, continence, yet pours out before us, even to a profuseness, all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety.<sup>168</sup> Why should we then affect a rigor contrary to the manner of God and of nature, by abridging or scanting those means which books freely permitted are, both to the trial of virtue, and the exercise of truth?

It would be better done to learn that the law must needs be frivolous which goes to restrain things uncertainly and yet equally working to good and to evil. And were I the chooser, a dram of well-doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil-doing. For God sure esteems the growth and completing of one virtuous person more than the restraint of ten vicious. And albeit whatever thing we hear or see, sitting, walking, travelling, or conversing, may be fitly called our book, and is of the same effect that writings are; yet grant the thing to be prohibited were only books, it appears that this order hitherto is far insufficient to the end which it intends. Do we not see—not once or oftener, but weekly—that continued court-libel<sup>169</sup> against the Parliament and City printed, as the wet sheets can witness, and dispersed among us, for all that licensing can do? Yet this is the prime service a man would think, wherein this Order should give proof of itself. If it were executed, you'll say. But certain, if execution be remiss or blindfold now, and in this particular, what will it be hereafter and in other books?

If then the Order shall not be vain and frustrate, behold a new labor, Lords and Commons. Ye must repeal and pro-

<sup>168</sup> Cf. the value set by the voluptuous and incontinent Belial in *P.L.* II, 147–8, on his

intellectual being,

Those thoughts that wander through eternity.

<sup>169</sup> The *Mercurius Aulicus* or *Court Mercury*, published while King Charles had his headquarters at Oxford. Cf. Introduction #87.

scribe all scandalous and unlicensed books already printed and divulged<sup>170</sup> (after ye have drawn them up into a list, that all may know which are condemned and which not) and ordain that no foreign books be delivered out of custody, till they have been read over. This office will require the whole time of not a few overseers, and those no vulgar men. There be also books which are partly useful and excellent, partly culpable and pernicious; this work will ask as many more officials, to make expurgations and expunctions,<sup>171</sup> that the commonwealth of learning be not damnified. In fine, when the multitude of books increase upon their hands, ye must be fain to catalogue all those printers who are found frequently offending, and forbid the importation of their whole suspected typography. In a word, that this your Order may be exact and not deficient, ye must reform it perfectly according to the model of Trent and Seville,<sup>172</sup> which I know ye abhor to do.

Yet, though ye should condescend to this, which God forbid, the Order still would be but fruitless and defective to that end whereto ye meant it. If to prevent sects and schisms, who is so unread or so uncatechized in story that hath not heard of many sects refusing books as a hindrance, and preserving their doctrine unmixed for many ages, only by unwritten traditions? The Christian faith, for that was once a schism, is not unknown to have spread all over Asia, ere any Gospel or Epistle was seen in writing. If the amendment of manners be aimed at, look into Italy and Spain, whether those places be one scruple the better, the honester, the wiser, the chaster, since all the inquisitional rigor that hath been executed upon books.

Another reason whereby to make it plain that this Order will miss the end it seeks, consider by the quality which ought to be in every licenser. It cannot be denied but that he who is made judge to sit upon the birth or death of books, whether they may be wafted into this world or not, had need to be a man above the common measure, both studious, learned, and

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<sup>170</sup> *divulged*: publicly distributed, made generally available.

<sup>171</sup> *expunctions*: expurgings, excisions by the censor.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. notes 72 and 84 above, and Introduction #55.

judicious. There may be else no mean mistakes in the censure of what is passable or not, which is also no mean injury. If he be of such worth as behoves him, there cannot be a more tedious and unpleasing journey-work,<sup>173</sup> a greater loss of time levied upon his head, than to be made the perpetual reader of unchosen books and pamphlets, oftentimes huge volumes. There is no book that is acceptable unless at certain seasons; but to be enjoined the reading of that at all times, and in a hand scarce legible, whereof three pages would not down at any time in the fairest print, is an imposition which I cannot believe how he that values time and his own studies, or is but of a sensible<sup>174</sup> nostril, should be able to endure.

In this one thing I crave leave of the present licensers to be pardoned for so thinking; who doubtless took this office up, looking on it through their obedience to the Parliament, whose command perhaps made all things seem easy and unlaborious to them; but that this short trial hath wearied them out already, their own expressions and excuses to them who make so many journeys to solicit their license, are testimony enough. Seeing, therefore, those who now possess the employment, by all evident signs wish themselves well rid of it, and that no man of worth, none that is not a plain unthrift of his own hours, is ever likely to succeed them, except he mean to put himself to the salary of a press corrector, we may easily foresee what kind of licensers we are to expect hereafter, either ignorant, imperious, and remiss, or basely pecuniary. This is what I had to show, wherein this Order cannot conduce to that end, whereof it bears the intention.

I lastly proceed from the no good it can do, to the manifest hurt it causes in being first the greatest discouragement and affront that can be offered to learning and to learned men.

It was the complaint and lamentation of prelates, upon every least breath of a motion to remove pluralities<sup>175</sup> and distribute

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<sup>173</sup> *journey-work*: work by the day, or work by a journeyman or day-laborer.

<sup>174</sup> *sensible*: sensitive.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, note 218.



more equally church revenues, that then all learning would be for ever dashed and discouraged. But as for that opinion, I never found cause to think that the tenth part of learning stood or fell with the clergy; nor could I ever but hold it for a sordid and unworthy speech of any churchman who had a competency left him. If, therefore, ye be loth to dishearten utterly and discontent, not the mercenary crew of false pretenders to learning, but the free and ingenuous sort of such as evidently were born to study and love learning for itself, not for lucre, or any other end but the service of God and of truth, and perhaps that lasting fame and perpetuity of praise which God and good men have consented shall be the reward of those whose published labors advance the good of mankind; then know, that so far to distrust the judgment and the honesty of one who hath but a common repute in learning, and never yet offended, as not to count him fit to print his mind without a tutor and examiner, lest he should drop a schism, or something of corruption, is the greatest displeasure and indignity to a free and knowing spirit that can be put upon him.

What advantage is it to be a man over it is to be a boy at school, if we have only scaped the *ferula*<sup>176</sup> to come under the fescue of an Imprimatur; if serious and elaborate writings, as if they were no more than the theme of a grammar-lad under his pedagogue, must not be uttered without the cursory eyes of a temporizing and extemporizing licenser? He who is not trusted with his own actions, his drift not being known to be evil, and standing to the hazard of law and penalty, has no great argument to think himself reputed, in the commonwealth wherein he was born, for other than a fool or a foreigner.

When a man writes to the world, he summons up all his reason and deliberation to assist him; he searches, meditates, is industrious, and likely consults and confers with his judicious friends, after all which done he takes himself to be informed in what he writes, as well as any that writ before him. If in

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<sup>176</sup> *ferula*: a schoolmaster's rod. The *fescue* is usually defined as a pointer.

this the most consummate act of his fidelity and ripeness, no years, no industry, no former proof of his abilities can bring him to that state of maturity as not to be still mistrusted and suspected (unless he carry all his considerate diligence, all his midnight watchings, and expense of Palladian<sup>177</sup> oil, to the hasty view of an unleisured licenser, perhaps much his younger, perhaps far his inferior in judgment, perhaps one who never knew the labor of book-writing), and if he be not repulsed, or slighted, must appear in print like a puny<sup>178</sup> with his guardian, and his censor's hand on the back of his title to be his bail and surety that he is no idiot, or seducer; it cannot be but a dishonor and derogation to the author, to the book, to the privilege and dignity of learning.

And what if the author shall be one so copious of fancy as to have many things well worth the adding, come into his mind after licensing, while the book is yet under the press, which not seldom happens to the best and diligentest writers; and that perhaps a dozen times in one book. The printer dares not go beyond his licensed copy. So often then must the author trudge to his leave-giver, that those his new insertions may be viewed, and many a jaunt will be made, ere that licenser, for it must be the same man, can either be found, or found at leisure. Meanwhile, either the press must stand still, which is no small damage, or the author lose his accuratest thoughts, and send the book forth worse than he had made it, which to a diligent writer is the greatest melancholy and vexation that can befall.

And how can a man teach with authority, which is the life of teaching, how can he be a doctor in his book as he ought to be, or else had better be silent, whenas all he teaches, all he delivers, is but under the tuition, under the correction of his

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<sup>177</sup> *Palladian*: pertaining to Pallas Athene. The oil of the olive tree, which was sacred to her, when burned by an author, might be regarded as no less her gift than the wisdom which she was supposed to give to her devotees.

<sup>178</sup> *puny*: a child, a person under the legal age of majority. Through old French from Latin *post natus*.

patriarchal<sup>179</sup> licenser to blot or alter what precisely accords not with the hide-bound humor which he calls his judgment? When every acute reader upon the first sight of a pedantic license, will be ready with these like words to ding the book a quoit's distance from him: "I hate a pupil teacher, I endure not an instructor that comes to me under the wardship of an overseeing fist. I know nothing of the licenser, but that I have his own hand here for his arrogance; who shall warrant me his judgment?"

"The State, sir," replies the stationer,<sup>180</sup> but has a quick return: "The State shall be my governors, but not my critics; they may be mistaken in the choice of a licenser, as easily as this licenser may be mistaken in an author; this is some common stuff"; and he might add from Sir Francis Bacon,<sup>181</sup> "That such authorized books are but the language of the times." For though a licenser should happen to be judicious more than ordinary, which will be a great jeopardy of the next succession, yet his very office, and his commission enjoins him to let pass nothing but what is vulgarly received already.

Nay, which is more lamentable, if the work of any deceased author, though never so famous in his lifetime, and even to this day, come to their hands for licence to be printed, or reprinted; if there be found in his book one sentence of a venturous edge, uttered in the height of zeal, and who knows whether it might not be the dictate of a divine spirit, yet not suiting with every low, decrepit humor of their own, though it were Knox<sup>182</sup> himself, the reformer of a kingdom, that spake it, they will not pardon him their dash; the sense of that great

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<sup>179</sup> *Patriarchal* seems to be used in the technical, ecclesiastical sense, of a patriarch or prelate in charge of a patriarchate—roughly equivalent to an archbishopric.

<sup>180</sup> The Stationers' Company was the official organization of London printers and publishers. Cf. Introduction #56.

<sup>181</sup> Milton is quoting from Bacon's *An Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England*, from which he quotes again below. Cf. note 213 and Introduction #76 and 81.

<sup>182</sup> John Knox (1505-1572), the strongest leader of the Presbyterians in Scotland and the uncompromising opponent of Mary, Queen of Scots. Cf. Introduction #88.

man shall to all posterity be lost, for the fearfulness, or the presumptuous rashness, of a perfunctory licenser. And to what an author this violence hath been lately done, and in what book of greatest consequence to be faithfully published, I could now instance, but shall forbear till a more convenient season.<sup>183</sup>

Yet if these things be not resented seriously and timely by them who have the remedy in their power, but that such iron-moulds<sup>184</sup> as these shall have authority to gnaw out the choicest periods of exquisitest books, and to commit such a treacherous fraud against the orphan remainders of worthiest men after death, the more sorrow will belong to that hapless race of men whose misfortune it is to have understanding. Henceforth, let no man care to learn, or care to be more than worldly wise; for certainly in higher matters to be ignorant and slothful, to be a common steadfast dunce, will be the only pleasant life, and only in request.

And as it is a particular disesteem of every knowing person alive, and most injurious to the written labors and monuments of the dead, so to me it seems an undervaluing and vilifying of the whole nation. I cannot set so light by all the invention,<sup>185</sup> the art, the wit, the grave and solid judgment which is in England, as that it can be comprehended in any twenty capacities how good soever; much less that it should not pass except their superintendence be over it, except it be sifted and strained with their strainers; that it should be uncurrent without their manual stamp. Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopolised<sup>186</sup> and traded in by tickets<sup>187</sup>

<sup>183</sup> As the unidentified author, White suggested either Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634), whose *Institutes* were published with some mutilation by Parliament's authority, or John Knox (1505-1572), whose *History* suffered mutilation in the edition published in 1644.

<sup>184</sup> *iron-moulds*: "A spot or discoloration on cloth etc. caused by iron-rust or ink-stain." (N.E.D.)

<sup>185</sup> *invention*: creative power, the writer's talent for finding what to say and how to say it.

<sup>186</sup> Monopolies in various commodities had been granted to several of Elizabeth's courtiers and increased in James I's reign, until in 1624 they were abolished, except as patents permitted them on new inventions.

<sup>187</sup> *tickets*: official warrants or permissions of any kind. The N.E.D.

and statutes and standards. We must not think to make a staple commodity of all the knowledge in the land, to mark and license it like our broadcloth and our woolpacks. What is it but a servitude like that imposed by the Philistines,<sup>188</sup> not to be allowed the sharpening of our own axes and coulter,<sup>189</sup> but we must repair from all quarters to twenty licensing forges.

Had any one written and divulged erroneous things and scandalous to honest life, misusing and forfeiting the esteem had of his reason among men; if, after conviction, this only censure were adjudged him, that he should never henceforth write, but what were first examined by an appointed officer, whose hand should be annexed to pass his credit for him, that now he might be safely read; it could not be apprehended less than a disgraceful punishment.

Whence, to include the whole nation, and those that never yet thus offended, under such a diffident<sup>190</sup> and suspectful prohibition, may plainly be understood what a disparagement it is. So much the more, whenas debtors and delinquents may walk abroad without a keeper, but unoffensive books must not stir forth without a visible jailor in their title. Nor is it to the common people less than a reproach; for if we be so jealous<sup>191</sup> over them as that we dare not trust them with an English pamphlet, what do we but censure them for a giddy, vicious, and ungrounded people; in such a sick and weak state of faith and discretion, as to be able to take nothing down but through the pipe<sup>192</sup> of a licenser. That this is care or love of them, we cannot pretend, whenas in those popish places where the laity are most hated and despised, the same strictness is used over

quotes Greene *James IV*, III, ii; "I am the king's purveyor. . . . Here's my ticket, deny it if thou darest."

<sup>188</sup> When the Philistines disarmed the Israelites and forbade them to have forges, "all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his couler, and his ax." (I Sam. xiii, 20.)

<sup>189</sup> *coulter*: the iron "foot" or point of the plough.

<sup>190</sup> *diffident*: lacking in confidence, suspicious. Cf. Eve's profession not to be diffident of Adam in *P.L.* IX, 293.

<sup>191</sup> *jealous*: suspiciously watchful.

<sup>192</sup> *pipe*: a tube for taking medicine.

them. Wisdom we cannot call it, because it stops but one breach of license, nor that neither; whenas those corruptions which it seeks to prevent, break in faster at other doors which cannot be shut.

And in conclusion, it reflects to the disrepute of our ministers also, of whose labors we should hope better, and of the proficiency which their flock reaps by them, than that after all this light of the Gospel which is and is to be, and all this continual preaching, they should be still frequented with such an unprincipled, unedified, and laic<sup>193</sup> rabble, as that the whiff of every new pamphlet should stagger them out of their catechism and Christian walking. This may have much reason to discourage the ministers, when such a low conceit is had of all their exhortations and the benefiting of their hearers, as that they are not thought fit to be turned loose to three sheets of paper without a licenser; that all the sermons, all the lectures preached, printed, vented in such numbers, and such volumes, as have now well-nigh made all other books unsaleable, should not be armor enough against one single enchiridion,<sup>194</sup> without the castle of St. Angelo<sup>195</sup> of an Imprimatur.

And lest some should persuade ye, Lords and Commons, that these arguments of learned men's discouragement at this your Order are mere flourishes, and not real, I could recount what I have seen and heard in other countries where this kind of inquisition tyrannizes; when I have sat among their learned men, for that honor I had, and been counted happy to be born in such a place of philosophic freedom as they supposed England was, while themselves did nothing but bemoan the servile condition into which learning amongst them was brought; that this was it which had damped the glory of Italian wits; that nothing had been there written now these many years but

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<sup>193</sup> *laic*: belonging to the laity. One of the grievances of the Puritans against Laud was his apparent increasing of the prestige of the clergy at the expense of the laity in the English church. Cf. *C.G.*, note 177.

<sup>194</sup> *enchiridion*: a manual or small hand-book.

<sup>195</sup> The castle of St. Angelo, on the left bank of the Tiber in Rome, was built in 136 A.D. by the emperor Hadrian and was used as an imperial mausoleum for nearly a century. In Milton's time it was the papal prison.

flattery and fustian. There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo,<sup>196</sup> grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought. And though I knew that England then was groaning loudest under the prelatical yoke, nevertheless I took it as a pledge of future happiness that other nations were so persuaded of her liberty.

Yet was it beyond my hope that those worthies were then breathing in her air, who should be her leaders to such a deliverance as shall never be forgotten by any revolution of time that this world hath to finish. When that was once begun, it was as little in my fear, that what words of complaint I heard among learned men of other parts uttered against the Inquisition, the same I should hear by as learned men at home uttered in time of Parliament against an order of licensing; and that so generally, that when I had disclosed myself a companion of their discontent, I might say, if without envy, that he whom an honest quæstorship had endeared to the Sicilians, was not more by them importuned against Verres,<sup>197</sup> than the favorable opinion which I had among many who honor ye, and are known and respected by ye, loaded me with entreaties and persuasions that I would not despair to lay together that which just reason should bring into my mind toward the removal of an undeserved thralldom upon learning.

That this is not, therefore, the disburdening of a particular fancy, but the common grievance of all those who had prepared their minds and studies above the vulgar pitch to advance

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<sup>196</sup> Galileo (1564-1642) was in prison near Florence when Milton visited there in 1638-9. Although he was the prisoner of the Inquisition from the publication of his evidence for the Copernican theory in 1632 until his death, he was not entirely inaccessible to visitors. Cf. the conclusive replies by several reviewers to Professor S. B. Liljegren's denial that Milton could have been admitted to see Galileo at the Villa Martellini. (Liljegren, *Studies in Milton*, Land, 1919.)

<sup>197</sup> While serving as quæstor in Sicily in 75 B.C., Cicero won such confidence that the Sicilians asked him to prosecute Gaius Verres for his extortions there as prætor in 73-1. After taking less than two months to collect evidence, Cicero virtually won his case and drove Verres into exile by the first of his orations against him.

truth in others, and from others to entertain it, thus much may satisfy. And in their name I shall for neither friend nor foe conceal what the general murmur is; that if it come to inquisitioning again and licensing, and that we are so timorous of ourselves and so suspicious of all men as to fear each book and the shaking of every leaf, before we know what the contents are; if some who but of late were little better than silenced from preaching,<sup>198</sup> shall come now to silence us from reading, except what they please, it cannot be guessed what is intended by some but a second tyranny over learning; and will soon put it out of controversy that bishops and presbyters are the same to us both name and thing.<sup>199</sup>

That those evils of prelacy which before from five or six and twenty sees<sup>200</sup> were distributively charged upon the whole people, will now light wholly upon learning, is not obscure to us; whenas now the pastor of a small unlearned parish, on the sudden shall be exalted archbishop over a large diocese<sup>201</sup> of books, and yet not remove, but keep his other cure too, a mystical<sup>202</sup> pluralist. He who but of late cried down the sole ordination of every novice bachelor of art, and denied sole jurisdiction over the simplest parishioner, shall now at home in his private chair assume both these over worthiest and excellentest books and ablest authors that write them. This is not, ye covenants<sup>203</sup> and protestations<sup>204</sup> that we have made,

<sup>198</sup> The Presbyterian clergy and their supporters in Parliament.

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Introduction #28.

<sup>200</sup> *sees*: the seats or headquarters of bishops.

<sup>201</sup> *diocese*: the province or territory administered by a bishop.

<sup>202</sup> *mystical*: (probably in this case) mysterious or strange. Cf. note 175 above.

<sup>203</sup> On 28 February, 1638, the Scots signed their National Covenant in Edinburgh and consolidated their resistance to Charles's effort to impose episcopacy on the Scottish Presbyterian church. The Solemn League and Covenant which Parliament finally ratified with the Scots in September, 1643, secured Scottish military aid against Charles for Parliament at the price of an engagement that the English church should become essentially presbyterian. Cf. Introduction #65.

<sup>204</sup> In May, 1641, when Charles planned to use the army to overawe Parliament, the members agreed on a Protestation asserting civil liberties, parliamentary freedom, etc.



this is not to put down prelaty; this is but to chop an episcopacy; this is but to translate the palace metropolitan<sup>205</sup> from one kind of dominion into another; this is but an old canonical<sup>206</sup> sleight of commuting our penance. To startle thus betimes at a mere unlicensed pamphlet will after a while be afraid of every conventicle,<sup>207</sup> and a while after will make a conventicle of every Christian meeting.

But I am certain that a state governed by the rules of justice and fortitude, or a church built and founded upon the rock of faith and true knowledge, cannot be so pusillanimous. While things are yet not constituted in religion, that freedom of writing should be restrained by a discipline imitated from the prelates, and learnt by them from the Inquisition, to shut us up all again into the breast of a licenser, must needs give cause of doubt and discouragement to all learned and religious men. Who cannot but discern the fineness<sup>208</sup> of this politic drift, and who are the contrivers: that while bishops were to be baited down,<sup>209</sup> then all presses might be open; it was the people's birthright and privilege in time of Parliament, it was the breaking forth of light?

But now, the bishops abrogated and voided<sup>210</sup> out of the Church, as if our reformation sought no more, but to make room for others into their seats under another name, the episcopal arts begin to bud again; the cruse<sup>211</sup> of truth must run no more oil; liberty of printing must be enthralled again under a prelatial commission of twenty, the privilege of the people nullified; and, which is worse, the freedom of learning must groan again, and to her old fetters: all this the Parliament yet sitting. Although their own late arguments and defences

<sup>205</sup> *metropolitan*: pertaining to an archbishop or to his power or property.

<sup>206</sup> *canonical*: pertaining to Canon Law or lawyers.

<sup>207</sup> *conventicle*: a religious meeting of any of the independent sects whose services were forbidden.

<sup>208</sup> *fineness*: subtlety, cleverness.

<sup>209</sup> *baited down*: i.e., like bears in the sport of bear-baiting.

<sup>210</sup> *voided*: emptied out, expelled.

<sup>211</sup> Milton was thinking of the widow's inexhaustible cruse of oil. I Kings xvii, 12.

against the prelates might remember them<sup>212</sup> that this obstructing violence meets for the most part with an event utterly opposite to the end which it drives at; instead of suppressing sects and schisms, it raises them and invests them with a reputation: "The punishing of wits enhances their authority," saith the Viscount St. Albans,<sup>213</sup> "and a forbidden writing is thought to be a certain spark of truth that flies up in the faces of them who seek to tread it out."

This Order, therefore, may prove a nursing mother<sup>214</sup> to sects, but I shall easily show how it will be a step-dame to Truth; and first by disabling us to the maintenance of what is known already.

Well knows he who uses to consider, that our faith and knowledge thrives by exercise, as well as our limbs and complexion.<sup>215</sup> Truth is compared in Scripture to a streaming fountain;<sup>216</sup> if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. A man may be a heretic in the truth;<sup>217</sup> and if he believe things only because his pastor says so, or the Assembly<sup>218</sup> so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy. There is not any burden that some would gladlier post off to another than the charge and care of their religion. There be, who knows not that there be, of Protestants and professors<sup>219</sup> who live

<sup>212</sup> *remember*: remind.

<sup>213</sup> *Viscount St. Albans*: Bacon. See note 181 above.

<sup>214</sup> "And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." (Isa. xlix, 23.)

<sup>215</sup> *complexion*: the balance of "humors" in the body, on which an individual's health and character were understood to depend. Cf. the complexion inclined "to melancholy" in *Doctrine and Discipline* I, ii.

<sup>216</sup> Psalms lxxxv, 11.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Milton's definition of heresy in *Of True Religion* as "a religion taken up and believed from the traditions of men" (C.E. VI, 167), and his contrast there of "implicit faith" with "unimplicit truth."

<sup>218</sup> The Assembly of Divines, then sitting at Westminster, was prevailingly Presbyterian.

<sup>219</sup> *professors*: persons professing religious (and presumably Protestant) faith.

and die in as arrant an implicit faith, as any lay Papist of Loretto.<sup>220</sup>

A wealthy man addicted to his pleasure and to his profits, finds religion to be a traffic so entangled, and of so many piddling accounts, that of all mysteries<sup>221</sup> he cannot skill<sup>222</sup> to keep a stock going upon that trade. What should he do? Fain he would have the name to be religious, fain he would bear up with his neighbors in that. What does he, therefore, but resolves to give over toiling, and to find himself out some factor<sup>223</sup> to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; some Divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion; esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is become a dividual<sup>224</sup> movable, and goes and comes near him, according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him. His religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep, rises, is saluted, and after the malmsey,<sup>225</sup> or some well-spiced brewage, and better breakfasted than he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem,<sup>226</sup> his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion.

<sup>220</sup> Since 1294, when the veneration of the Italian shrine at Loretto, near Ancona, began in recognition of the translation there by angels of the house where Christ was born, the popularity of the shrine has attested Catholic faith.

<sup>221</sup> *mysteries*: trades, skills—in the sense in which the term was applied to the trades which were organized into guilds.

<sup>222</sup> *skill*: contrive.

<sup>223</sup> *factor*: agent.

<sup>224</sup> *dividual*: separable.

<sup>225</sup> *malmsey*: a strong, sweet wine.

<sup>226</sup> Riding from Bethany on his way to Jerusalem, Christ "was hungry: And seeing a fig tree afar off, . . . he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and . . . found nothing but leaves." (Mark xi, 12-3.)

Another sort there be, who, when they hear that all things shall be ordered, all things regulated and settled, nothing written but what passes through the custom-house of certain publicans<sup>227</sup> that have the tonnaging and the poundaging<sup>228</sup> of all free-spoken truth, will straight give themselves up into your hands, make 'em and cut 'em out what religion ye please. There be delights, there be recreations and jolly pastimes that will fetch the day about from sun to sun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightful dream. What need they torture their heads with that which others have taken so strictly, and so unalterably into their own purveying? These are the fruits which a dull ease and cessation of our knowledge will bring forth among the people. How goodly, and how to be wished, were such an obedient unanimity as this, what a fine conformity would it starch us all into! Doubtless a staunch and solid piece of framework, as any January could freeze together.

Nor much better will be the consequence even among the clergy themselves. It is no new thing never heard of before, for a parochial minister, who has his reward, and is at his Hercules pillars<sup>229</sup> in a warm benefice, to be easily inclinable, if he have nothing else that may rouse up his studies, to finish his circuit in an English concordance and a topic folio, the gatherings and savings of a sober graduateship, a harmony<sup>230</sup> and a catena,<sup>231</sup> treading the constant round of certain common doctrinal heads, attended with their uses, motives, marks, and means; out of which, as out of an alphabet or sol-fa, by forming

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<sup>227</sup> *publicans*: tax-gatherers.

<sup>228</sup> Tonnage and poundage were a form of excise taxes traditionally granted to the king by Parliament, but disputed in 1641, when "the tonnage and poundage act declared the taking of all such duties without the consent of Parliament illegal." (F. C. Montague, *The History of England from the Accession of James I to the Restoration*, p. 242.)

<sup>229</sup> *Hercules pillars*: Gibraltar and the promontory opposite to it, which in the ancient world represented the final limit of at least ordinary travel or ambition.

<sup>230</sup> *harmony*: a simple treatise bringing divergent scripture narratives, such as those in the four gospels, into harmony with one another.

<sup>231</sup> *catena*: (in Latin) chain. The term was applied to compilations as various as St. Thomas Aquinas' *Catena Aurea* and the *Golden Chaine* of William Perkins. Cf. Introduction #101.

and transforming, joining and disjoining variously a little bookcraft, and two hours' meditation, might furnish him unspeakably to the performance of more than a weekly charge of sermoning; not to reckon up the infinite helps of interlinearies,<sup>232</sup> breviaries, synopses, and other loitering gear.

But as for the multitude of sermons ready printed and piled up on every text that is not difficult, our London trading St. Thomas<sup>233</sup> in his vestry,<sup>234</sup> and add to boot St. Martin and St. Hugh, have not within their hallowed limits more vendible ware of all sorts ready made; so that penury he never need fear of pulpit provision, having where so plenteously to refresh his magazine. But if his rear and flanks be not impaled,<sup>235</sup> if his back door be not secured by the rigid licenser, but that a bold book may now and then issue forth and give the assault to some of his old collections in their trenches; it will concern him then to keep waking, to stand in watch, to set good guards and sentinels about his received opinions, to walk the round and counter-round with his fellow inspectors, fearing lest any of his flock be seduced, who also then would be better instructed, better exercised and disciplined. And God send<sup>236</sup> that the fear of this diligence, which must then be used, do not make us affect the laziness of a licensing church.

For if we be sure we are in the right, and do not hold the truth guiltily—which becomes not—, if we ourselves condemn not our own weak and frivolous teaching, and the people for an untaught and irreligious, gadding rout, what can be more fair than when a man judicious, learned, and of a conscience, for

<sup>232</sup> *interlinearies*: interlinear commentaries on scripture.

<sup>233</sup> St. Thomas, etc. The identification of the London churches intended are not clear, but the three spots indicated evidently bounded the book-selling district in the city.

<sup>234</sup> *vestry*: wardrobe or dressing room for the clergy in a church. The implication seems to be that this vestry served as a shop, or that an adjacent shop was called the vestry.

<sup>235</sup> *impaled*: protected. Cf. Satan's artillery in *P.L.* VI, 553-4.

"impal'd

On every side with shadowing squadrons deep."

<sup>236</sup> *send*, the reading of the original, has been emended by some editors to *fend*; i.e., prevent, fend.

aught we know, as good as theirs that taught us what we know, shall not privily from house to house, which is more dangerous, but openly by writing, publish to the world what his opinion is, what his reasons, and wherefore that which is now thought cannot be sound? Christ urged<sup>237</sup> it as wherewith to justify himself that he preached in public; yet writing is more public than preaching; and more easy to refutation, if need be, there being so many whose business and profession merely it is, to be the champions of truth; which if they neglect, what can be imputed but their sloth, or inability?

Thus much we are hindered and disinured<sup>238</sup> by this course of licensing toward the true knowledge of what we seem to know. For how much it hurts and hinders the licensers themselves in the calling of their ministry, more than any secular employment, if they will discharge that office as they ought, so that of necessity they must neglect either the one duty or the other, I insist not, because it is a particular, but leave it to their own conscience, how they will decide it there.

There is yet behind of what I purposed to lay open, the incredible loss and detriment that this plot of licensing puts us to. More than if some enemy at sea should stop up all our havens, and ports, and creeks, it hinders and retards the importation of our richest merchandise, truth.<sup>239</sup> Nay, it was first established and put in practice by Antichristian malice and mystery, on set purpose to extinguish, if it were possible, the light of reformation, and to settle falsehood; little differing from that policy wherewith the Turk upholds his Alcoran,<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Questioned by the high priest, "Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; . . . in secret have I said nothing." (John xviii, 20.)

<sup>238</sup> *disinured*: diverted from a customary practice, or one to which habit has become inured.

<sup>239</sup> Perhaps an allusion to the pearl of great price in Christ's parable of the merchant who sold everything for that single purchase (Matt. xiii, 46) —or to the "trade, not for gold, silver, jewels, nor for silks, nor for spices, nor for any other commodity of matter, but only for God's first creature, which was *Light*," which Bacon describes his New Atlanteans as maintaining. (*Essays, Advancement of Learning, New Atlantis, and Other Pieces*, edited by R. F. Jones, p. 469.)

<sup>240</sup> *Alcoran*: the *Koran* or sacred book of the Mohammedans.

by the prohibition of printing. 'Tis not denied, but gladly confessed, we are to send our thanks and vows to Heaven, louder than most of nations, for that great measure of truth which we enjoy, especially in those main points between us and the Pope, with his appurtenances the prelates; but he who thinks we are to pitch our tent here, and have attained the utmost prospect of reformation that the mortal glass<sup>241</sup> wherein we contemplate can show us, till we come to beatific vision,<sup>242</sup> that man by this very opinion declares that he is yet far short of truth.

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape<sup>243</sup> most glorious to look on. But when he ascended, and his apostles after him were laid asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who, as that story goes of the Egyptian Typhon<sup>244</sup> with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do, till her Master's second coming.<sup>245</sup> He shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and per-

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<sup>241</sup> *glass*: mirror. Perhaps an allusion to I Corinthians xiii, 12: "For now we see through (or *in*) a glass, darkly; but then, face to face."

<sup>242</sup> Cf. the expression of faith in "perfect glorification" for the redeemed in heaven, "arising chiefly from the divine vision." (C.D. I, xxxiii. Cf. P.L. III, 60-3.)

<sup>243</sup> Cf. "the very shape and visible image of virtue." (C.G. I, i.)

<sup>244</sup> Milton's public was familiar with Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*, where the myth is interpreted as a symbol of the ceaseless assembly by Isis of the divine truth which is continually mangled and scattered by Typhon. Cf. Introduction #63. In *An Humble Motion to the Parliament of England Concerning the Advancement of Learning* (1649, pp. 5-6) John Hall transferred the symbolism to the myth of Medea and described "the body of learning" as lying "scattered in as many pieces as ever Medea cut her little brother into, that they are as hard to finde and re-unite as his was."

<sup>245</sup> Cf. *Christian Doctrine* I, xxxiii, on Christ's second advent.

fection. Suffer not these licensing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity, forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do our obsequies<sup>246</sup> to the torn body of our martyred saint.

We boast our light; but if we look not wisely on the sun itself, it smites us into darkness. Who can discern those planets that are oft combust,<sup>247</sup> and those stars of brightest magnitude that rise and set with the sun, until the opposite motion of their orbs bring them to such a place in the firmament, where they may be seen evening or morning. The light which we have gained, was given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge. It is not the unfrocking of a priest, the unmitring of a bishop, and the removing him from off the Presbyterian shoulders that will make us a happy nation; no, if other things as great in the Church, and in the rule of life both economical<sup>248</sup> and political, be not looked into and reformed, we have looked so long upon the blaze that Zwinglius<sup>249</sup> and Calvin hath beacons up to us, that we are stark blind.

There be who perpetually complain of schisms and sects, and make it such a calamity that any man dissents from their maxims. 'Tis their own pride and ignorance which causes the disturbing, who neither will hear with meekness, nor can convince, yet all must be suppressed which is not found in their syntagma.<sup>250</sup> They are the troublers, they are the dividers of unity, who neglect and permit not others to unite those dissevered pieces which are yet wanting to the body of Truth. To be still searching what we know not by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it (for all her body is homogeneal and proportional), this is the golden rule in the-

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<sup>246</sup> *obsequies*: acts of veneration or of worship.

<sup>247</sup> *combust*: burnt up. The term was technically applied in astrology to any planet approaching within eight and a half degrees of the sun.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, note 198.

<sup>249</sup> Zwingli (1484-1531) is cited several times in the first *Defence* and once in *Tenure*. Cf. Introduction #59.

<sup>250</sup> *syntagma*: collection, systematic compilation. For the thought, see the Introduction #17.



ology as well as in arithmetic, and makes up the best harmony in a church; not the forced and outward union of cold and neutral and inwardly divided minds.

Lords and Commons of England, consider what nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors; a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of learning in her deepest sciences have been so ancient and so eminent among us, that writers of good antiquity and ablest judgment have been persuaded that even the school of Pythagoras<sup>251</sup> and the Persian wisdom, took beginning from the old philosophy of this island. And that wise and civil Roman, Julius Agricola,<sup>252</sup> who governed once here for Cæsar, preferred the natural wits of Britain before the labored studies of the French. Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal Transylvanian<sup>253</sup> sends out yearly from as far as the mountainous borders of Russia and beyond the Hercynian wilderness,<sup>254</sup> not their youth but their staid men, to learn our language and our theologic arts.

Yet that which is above all this, the favor and the love of Heaven, we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending<sup>255</sup> towards us. Why else was this nation chosen before any other, that out of her as out of

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<sup>251</sup> See the second *Oratorical Performance*, note 2.

<sup>252</sup> Julius Agricola (37-93 A.D.) was proconsul in Britain from 78 to 85, and under him the Roman conquest was consolidated. In the *Life of Agrippa* his son-in-law, Tacitus, says that he educated the sons of the chiefs in the liberal arts so successfully that those who had recently despised the language of the Romans were soon anxious to become eloquent in it.

<sup>253</sup> From 1535 until 1689 Transylvania was independent, and in the seventeenth century it was aggressively Protestant. In May, 1655, after the massacre of the Waldensians in Piedmont, Milton, as Secretary to the Council of State, wrote cordially to the Transylvanian prince about the joint action that Cromwell was proposing between England and several continental states. (*C.E.* XIII, 162.)

<sup>254</sup> Hales points out that the name *Hercynian* survives in that of the Harz (mountains), but that ancient writers applied it vaguely to most of the mountains in the south and center of Germany.

<sup>255</sup> *propending*: inclining.

Sion<sup>256</sup> should be proclaimed and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of reformation to all Europe? And had it not been the obstinate perverseness of our prelates against the divine and admirable spirit of Wyclif,<sup>257</sup> to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Huss and Jerome,<sup>258</sup> no, nor the name of Luther, or of Calvin, had been ever known; the glory of reforming all our neighbors had been completely ours. But now, as our obdurate clergy have with violence demeaned<sup>259</sup> the matter, we are become hitherto the latest and the backwardest scholars, of whom God offered to have made us the teachers.

Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, even to the reforming of reformation itself. What does he then but reveal himself to his servants, and, as his manner is, first to his Englishmen,<sup>260</sup> I say as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast city, a city of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his protection. The shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates<sup>261</sup> and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps,<sup>262</sup> musing, searching,

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<sup>256</sup> *Sion*: Mount Zion in Jerusalem, used to represent Jerusalem itself.

<sup>257</sup> For Wycliffe and Huss see *Church Government*, note 88.

<sup>258</sup> Jerome of Prague (d. 1416), a strong supporter of Huss, studied and read Wycliffe's work at Oxford in 1398, and later became a devoted, though not perfectly loyal, supporter of Huss in Bohemia. He was burned at the stake.

<sup>259</sup> *demeaned*: conducted, handled.

<sup>260</sup> Milton is speaking of the popular faith expressed by Hugh Peters when he said in the Whitehall debates that "God seems to call for something at our hands about religion, and that only because we are Englishmen." (A. S. P. Woodhouse, *Puritanism and Liberty*, p. 138.)

<sup>261</sup> *plates*: armor of plate mail.

<sup>262</sup> "Christ Jesus the Son of Glory and Righteousness hath lighted up such a candle in the midst of this Nation, and from hence in the midst of *Europe*, and the world, (as to Soul-freedom) that all the Devils of Hell

revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching reformation; others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement.

What could a man require more from a nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful laborers, to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, of sages, and of worthies? We reckon more than five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks, had we but eyes to lift up; the fields are white already.<sup>263</sup> Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up in this city.

What some lament of, we rather should rejoice at, should rather praise this pious forwardness among men, to reassume the ill-deputed care of their religion into their own hands again. A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity might win all these diligences to join and unite into one general and brotherly search after truth; could we but forego this prelatical tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men. I doubt not, if some great and worthy stranger should come among us, wise to discern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it, observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reasonings in the pursuance of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as Pyrrhus<sup>264</sup> did, admiring the Roman docility and

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shall never be able to extinguish," says *An Outrageous Outcry for Tithes . . . Answered* (1652), p. 28. This tract is anonymous.

<sup>263</sup> Milton paraphrases Christ's words to the disciples whom he sent to preach to the Jews. (John iv, 35.)

<sup>264</sup> Pyrrhus (318-272 B.C.), King of Epirus, is said by Florus (*Epitome de gestis Romanorum* I, 18) to have paid this tribute to Roman discipline after his victory over Valerius Laevinus at Heraclea in 280 B.C.

courage, "If such were my Epirots, I would not despair the greatest design that could be attempted to make a church or kingdom happy."

Yet these are the men cried out against for schismatics and sectaries; as if, while the temple<sup>265</sup> of the Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there should be a sort of irrational men who could not consider there must be many schisms<sup>266</sup> and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the house of God can be built. And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world; neither can every piece of the building be of one form; nay rather the perfection consists in this, that out of many moderate varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportional, arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure.

Let us, therefore, be more considerate builders, more wise in spiritual architecture, when great reformation is expected. For now the time seems come, wherein Moses, the great prophet, may sit in heaven rejoicing to see that memorable and glorious wish of his fulfilled, when not only our seventy elders, but all the Lord's people, are become prophets. No marvel then though some men, and some good men too, perhaps, but young in goodness, as Joshua<sup>267</sup> then was, envy them. They fret, and out of their own weakness are in agony, lest these divisions and subdivisions will undo us. The adversary again applauds, and waits the hour. When they have branched themselves out, saith he, small enough into parties and partitions, then will be our time. Fool! he sees not the firm root, out of which we all grow, though into branches;

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<sup>265</sup> The stones for Solomon's temple were all shaped exactly for their positions at the quarry. (I Kings vi, 7; but cf. the longer account in II Chronicles ii, 5-9.)

<sup>266</sup> Milton puns on the literal meaning of *schism*, cutting or division.

<sup>267</sup> When Joshua was still one of Moses' "young men," he protested against certain prophets in the camp. "And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets." (Num. xi, 29.)

nor will beware until he see our small divided maniples<sup>268</sup> cutting through at every angle of his ill-united and unwieldy brigade. And that we are to hope better of all these supposed sects and schisms, and that we shall not need that solicitude, honest perhaps, though over-timorous, of them that vex in this behalf, but shall laugh in the end at those malicious applauders of our differences, I have these reasons to persuade me.

First, when a city shall be as it were besieged and blocked about, her navigable river infested, inroads and incursions round, defiance<sup>269</sup> and battle oft rumored to be marching up even to her walls and suburb trenches; that then the people, or the greater part, more than at other times, wholly taken up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reformed, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, even to a rarity and admiration, things not before discoursed or written of, argues first a singular goodwill, contentedness and confidence in your prudent foresight, and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives itself to a gallant bravery and well grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was, who, when Rome was nigh besieged by Hannibal,<sup>270</sup> being in the city, bought that piece of ground at no cheap rate whereon Hannibal himself encamped his own regiment.

Next, it is a lively and cheerful presage of our happy success and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits<sup>271</sup> pure and vigorous not only to vital but to rational

<sup>268</sup> *maniple*: a small company or unit of Roman soldiers.

<sup>269</sup> Milton was thinking of the situation after the battle of Edgehill in October, 1643, when the Royalists advanced to the London suburbs, which had been fortified during the preceding summer.

<sup>270</sup> Livy's *History* (XXVI, xi) tells the story of the damaging effect on the morale of Hannibal's Carthaginians who were besieging Rome when it was reported that the field where he had his headquarters had just been sold at "*an un-reduced price*" inside Rome.

<sup>271</sup> Cf. Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd  
To vital spirits . . . , to animal,  
To intellectual  
giving "both life and sense," in *P.L.* V, 483-5, and the note there.

faculties, and those in the acutest and the pertest operations of wit and subtlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is; so when the cheerfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversy and new invention, it betokens us not degenerated nor drooping to a fatal decay, but casting off the old and wrinkled skin of corruption to outlive these pangs, and wax young again, entering the glorious ways of truth and prosperous virtue, destined to become great and honorable in these latter ages.

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks.<sup>272</sup> Methinks I see her as an eagle newing<sup>273</sup> her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

What should ye do then, should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this city? Should ye set an oligarchy of twenty engrossers<sup>274</sup> over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel? Believe it, Lords and Commons, they who counsel ye to such a suppressing, do as good as bid ye suppress yourselves; and I will soon show how.

If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer than your own mild and free and humane government. It

<sup>272</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, note 229.

<sup>273</sup> Partly on scribal ground R. S. Loomis (*M.L.N.* XXXII, 437) reads 'newing' for 'muing', the reading of the first edition. He derives the image from the *Bestiary*, 55: wu (how) he newed his gudhede (youth). In *R.E.S.* XIX, 61-7, G. Udney Yule independently justifies Professor Loomis' emendation.

<sup>274</sup> *engrossers*: persons attempting to "corner" a market.

is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased us, liberty which is the nurse of all great wits. This is that which hath rarefied and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heaven;<sup>275</sup> this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged, and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now less capable, less knowing, less eagerly pursuing of the truth, unless ye first make yourselves, that made us so, less the lovers, less the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formal, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have freed us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the search and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your own virtue propagated in us. Ye cannot suppress that unless ye reinforce an abrogated and merciless law, that fathers may despatch at will their own children. And who shall then stick closest to ye, and excite others? not he who takes up arms for coat and conduct,<sup>276</sup> and his four nobles<sup>277</sup> of Danegelt.<sup>278</sup> Although I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

What would be best advised, then, if it be found so hurtful

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<sup>275</sup> Milton probably thought in astrological terms, as he did in describing the union of Adam and Eve:

. . . all Heav'n  
And happy Constellations on that hour  
Shed their selectest influence.

(P.L. VIII, 511-3.)

<sup>276</sup> *coat and conduct*: an obsolete tax, originally levied to pay for clothing and transporting feudal troops in the king's service, and revived by Charles I in his effort to obtain funds without a parliamentary grant.

<sup>277</sup> *noble*: a coin worth about six shillings and eight pence.

<sup>278</sup> *Danegelt*: originally, the money secured by taxation in England to buy off the Danish invaders of the Saxon kingdoms. Under the Norman kings it was established as a tax on land. King Charles's lawyers appealed to it in Hampden's case.

and so unequal<sup>279</sup> to suppress opinions for the newness, or the unsuitableness to a customary acceptance, will not be my task to say. I only shall repeat what I have learned from one of your own honorable number, a right noble and pious lord, who, had he not sacrificed his life and fortunes to the Church and Commonwealth, we had not now missed and bewailed a worthy and undoubted patron of this argument. Ye know him I am sure; yet I for honor's sake, and may it be eternal to him, shall name him, the Lord Brook.<sup>280</sup> He, writing of Episcopacy, and by the way treating of sects and schisms, left ye his vote,<sup>281</sup> or rather now the last words of his dying charge (which I know will ever be of dear and honored regard with ye) so full of meekness and breathing charity that next to his last testament, who bequeathed love and peace to his disciples,<sup>282</sup> I cannot call to mind where I have read or heard words more mild and peaceful. He there exhorts us to hear with patience and humility those, however they be miscalled, that desire to live purely, in such a use of God's ordinances as the best guidance of their conscience gives them, and to tolerate them, though in some disconformity to ourselves. The book itself will tell us more at large, being published to the world and dedicated to the Parliament by him who, both for his life and for his death, deserves that what advice he left be not laid by without perusal.

And now the time in special is, by privilege to write and speak what may help to the further discussing of matters in agitation. The temple of Janus<sup>283</sup> with his two controversial faces might now not unsignificantly be set open. And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth,

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<sup>279</sup> *unequal*: unjust, inequitable.

<sup>280</sup> *Lord Brooke*: cf. Introduction #22, 74, and 79. In the Latin sense of the word *patron* (*patronus*) Milton was thinking of Brooke as the advocate or oratorical champion of his cause.

<sup>281</sup> *vote*: solemn wish.

<sup>282</sup> John xiv, 27.

<sup>283</sup> Janus, the ancient Italian deity of gates and doors, had a sacred gateway in the Roman Forum which was always open in time of war—probably because it was supposed to make the armies that departed through it fortunate. In peace it was kept closed.



so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter. Her confuting<sup>284</sup> is the best and surest suppressing. He who hears what praying there is for light and clearer knowledge to be sent down among us, would think of other matters to be constituted beyond the discipline of Geneva,<sup>285</sup> framed and fabriced<sup>286</sup> already to our hands.

Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy and oppose, if it come not first in at their casements. What a collusion is this, whenas we are exhorted by the wise man to use diligence, to seek for wisdom as for hidden treasures<sup>287</sup> early and late, that another order shall enjoin us to know nothing but by statute. When a man hath been laboring the hardest labor in the deep mines of knowledge, hath furnished out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reasons as it were a battle ranged, scattered and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adversary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and sun, if he please; only that he may try the matter by dint of argument, for his opponents then to skulk, to lay ambushments, to keep a narrow bridge of licensing where the challenger should pass, though it be valor enough in soldiership, is but weakness and cowardice in the wars of Truth.

For who knows not that Truth is strong, next to the Almighty. She needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious—those are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power. Give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old Proteus<sup>288</sup> did, who spake oracles only when he was caught and bound, but then rather she turns herself into all

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<sup>284</sup> *her: i.e., of her, in an objective sense.* The reference is to Falsehood.

<sup>285</sup> Cf. Introduction #18.

<sup>286</sup> *fabriced: fabricated.*

<sup>287</sup> Proverbs viii, II.

<sup>288</sup> The myth of Proteus' prophetic power goes back to the *Odyssey* IV, 384-93.

shapes except her own,<sup>289</sup> and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as Micaiah<sup>290</sup> did before Ahab, until she be adjured into her own likeness.

Yet is it not impossible that she may have more shapes than one. What else is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein Truth may be on this side, or on the other, without being unlike herself? What but a vain shadow else is the abolition of those ordinances, that hand-writing nailed to the cross;<sup>291</sup> what great purchase is this Christian liberty which Paul so often boasts of?<sup>292</sup> His doctrine is, that he who eats, or eats not, regards a day, or regards it not, may do either to the Lord.<sup>293</sup> How many other things might be tolerated in peace and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief stronghold of our hypocrisy to be ever judging one another. I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks; the ghost of a linen decency<sup>294</sup> yet haunts us. We stumble and are impatient at the least dividing of one visible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentals; and through our forwardness to suppress, and our backwardness to recover any enthralled piece of truth out of the gripe of custom,<sup>295</sup> we care not to keep truth separated from truth, which is the fiercest rent and disunion of all. We do not see that while we still affect by all means a rigid external formality, we may as soon

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<sup>289</sup> Cf. Owen Feltham: "*Truth, in logical arguments, is like a Prince in a Masque; where are so many other presented in the same attire, that we know not which is he!*" *Resolves* I, iv.

<sup>290</sup> For a time Micaiah, the prophet of God, agreed with the four hundred pagan prophets who gave Ahab the advice which led him into an attack on Ramoth-Gilead in which he lost his life. When he was adjured to speak the truth, he warned Ahab that the other prophets were inspired by "a lying spirit." (I Kings xxii, 23.)

<sup>291</sup> "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, . . . and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." (Col. ii, 14.)

<sup>292</sup> E.g. in Galatians v, 1.

<sup>293</sup> A paraphrase of Romans xiv, 6.

<sup>294</sup> Cf. Milton in *Of Reformation* girding at the bishops' "pure linen, . . . palls and mitres, gold and gewgaws fetched from Aaron's old wardrobe, or the flamen's vestry." (C.E. III, 2.)

<sup>295</sup> Cf. the attack on custom in *Church Government* I, v, and in the preface to the *Doctrine and Discipline*.

fall again into a gross conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of "wood, and hay, and stubble"<sup>296</sup> forced and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a church than many subdichotomies of petty schisms.

Not that I can think well of every light separation, or that all in a church is to be expected gold and silver and precious stones. It is not possible for man to sever the wheat from the tares,<sup>297</sup> the good fish from the other fry; that must be the angels' ministry at the end of mortal things. Yet if all cannot be of one mind,—as who looks they should be?—this doubtless is more wholesome, more prudent, and more Christian, that many be tolerated, rather than all compelled. I mean not tolerated popery and open superstition, which, as it extirpates all religions and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpate, provided first that all charitable and compassionate means be used to win and regain the weak and the misled; that also which is impious or evil absolutely, either against faith or manners,<sup>298</sup> no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw itself; but those neighboring differences, or rather indifferences, are what I speak of, whether in some point of doctrine or of discipline, which though they may be many, yet need not interrupt the unity of spirit, if we could but find among us the bond of peace.<sup>299</sup>

In the meanwhile, if any one would write and bring his helpful hand to the slow-moving reformation which we labor under, if truth have spoken to him before others, or but seemed at least to speak, who hath so bejesuited us that we should trouble that man with asking license to do so worthy a deed? And not consider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not aught more likely to be prohibited than truth itself; whose

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<sup>296</sup> "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble." (I Cor. iii, 12.)

<sup>297</sup> This is the lesson of the parable of the tares and the wheat in Matthew xiii, 24–30.

<sup>298</sup> Milton's position is parallel with that of Jeremy Taylor in *Liberty of Prophecy*. Section xix provides "that there may be no toleration of doctrine inconsistent with piety or the public good."

<sup>299</sup> An echo of Ephesians iv, 3.

first appearance to our eyes bleared and dimmed with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and unplausible than many errors, even as the person is of many a great man slight and contemptible to see to.<sup>300</sup> And what do they tell us vainly of new opinions, when this very opinion of theirs, that none must be heard but whom they like, is the worst and newest opinion of all others; and is the chief cause why sects and schisms do so much abound, and true knowledge is kept at distance from us; besides yet a greater danger which is in it. For when God shakes a kingdom<sup>301</sup> with strong and healthful commotions to a general reforming, 'tis not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing; but yet more true it is that God then raises to his own work men of rare abilities, and more than common industry, not only to look back and revise what hath been taught heretofore, but to gain further and go on, some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth.

For such is the order of God's enlightening his church, to dispense and deal out by degrees his beam, so as our earthly eyes may best sustain it. Neither is God appointed<sup>302</sup> and confined, where and out of what place these his chosen shall be first heard to speak: for he sees not as man sees, chooses not as man chooses, lest we should devote ourselves again to set places, and assemblies, and outward callings of men; planting our faith one while in the old Convocation<sup>303</sup> house, and another while in the Chapel at Westminster; when all the faith and religion that shall be there canonized,<sup>304</sup> is not sufficient without plain convincement and the charity of patient

<sup>300</sup> to see to: to look at.

<sup>301</sup> "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." (Hag. ii, 7.)

<sup>302</sup> appointed: bound by prescription. Cf.

Appoint not heavenly disposition, Father.

(S.A., 373.)

<sup>303</sup> The Chapter-house at Westminster was the meeting-place of Laud's Convocations, while the Assembly of Divines at Westminster was meeting in Henry VII's chapel.

<sup>304</sup> canonized: formulated in canons, given the force of ecclesiastical law. *The Longer and Shorter Catechisms* are the best known of the results of the long sittings of the Westminster Assembly.

instruction, to supple the least bruise of conscience, to edify the meanest Christian who desires to walk in the Spirit and not in the letter of human trust, for all the number of voices that can be there made; no, though Harry VII himself there, with all his liege toms about him, should lend them voices from the dead to swell their number.

And if the men be erroneous who appear to be the leading schismatics, what withholds us but our sloth, our self-will, and distrust in the right cause, that we do not give them gentle meetings and gentle dismissions, that we debate not and examine the matter thoroughly with liberal and frequent audience; if not for their sakes, yet for our own? Seeing no man who hath tasted learning but will confess the many ways of profiting by those who, not contented with stale receipts, are able to manage and set forth new positions to the world. And were they but as the dust and cinders of our feet, so long as in that notion they may yet serve to polish and brighten the armory of Truth, even for that respect they were not utterly to be cast away. But if they be of those whom God hath fitted for the special use of these times with eminent and ample gifts—and those perhaps neither among the priests, nor among the pharisees<sup>305</sup>—and we in the haste of a precipitant zeal shall make no distinction, but resolve to stop their mouths because we fear they come with new and dangerous opinions (as we commonly forejudge them ere we understand them); no less than woe to us while, thinking thus to defend the Gospel, we are found the persecutors.

There have been not a few since the beginning of this Parliament,<sup>306</sup> both of the Presbytery and others, who by their unlicensed books, to the contempt of an Imprimatur, first broke that triple ice clung about our hearts, and taught the people

<sup>305</sup> Milton thought of the traditional skill of the Hebrew Pharisees in law and of their unwillingness to meet Christ as an equal in their many encounters with him.

<sup>306</sup> *this Parliament*: the Long Parliament, which first assembled on 3 November, 1640. Milton thought of England as embarking under its guidance upon an enterprise more heroic than the first ventures of men on the sea, for which Horace said that hearts strengthened by *aes triplex* (triple brass) were needed.

to see day. I hope that none of those were the persuaders to renew upon us this bondage which they themselves have wrought so much good by contemning. But if neither the check that Moses gave to young Joshua,<sup>307</sup> nor the countermand which our Saviour gave to young John,<sup>308</sup> who was so ready to prohibit those whom he thought unlicensed, be not enough to admonish our elders how unacceptable to God their testy mood of prohibiting is; if neither their own remembrance what evil hath abounded in the church by this let of licensing, and what good they themselves have begun by transgressing it, be not enough, but that they will persuade and execute the most Dominican<sup>309</sup> part of the Inquisition over us, and are already with one foot in the stirrup so active at suppressing, it would be no unequal distribution, in the first place, to suppress the suppressors themselves; whom the change of their condition hath puffed up, more than their late experience of harder times hath made wise.

And as for regulating the press, let no man think to have the honor of advising ye better than yourselves have done in that order<sup>310</sup> published next before this, "that no book be printed, unless the printer's and the author's name, or at least the printer's, be registered." Those which otherwise come forth, if they be found mischievous and libellous, the fire and the executioner will be the timeliest and the most effectual remedy that man's prevention can use. For this authentic Spanish policy of licensing books, if I have said aught, will prove the most unlicensed book itself within a short while; and was the immediate image of a Star Chamber<sup>311</sup> decree to

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<sup>307</sup> Cf. note 268 above.

<sup>308</sup> When John reported having seen a man casting out devils in Jesus' name, "Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us." (Luke ix, 50.)

<sup>309</sup> "The first that preached that doctrine was Dominic," says Taylor in the Epistle Dedicatory to *The Liberty of Prophecyng*, "the founder of the begging order of friars, the friars-preachers; in memory of which the inquisition is intrusted only to the friars of his order." (Works, 1828, VII, ccccxvi.)

<sup>310</sup> Cf. Introduction #56-7.

<sup>311</sup> Cf. Introduction, #28, 56 and 57.

that purpose made in those very times when that Court did the rest of those her pious works, for which she is now fallen from the stars with Lucifer. Whereby ye may guess what kind of state prudence, what love of the people, what care of religion or good manners there was at the contriving, although with singular hypocrisy it pretended to bind books to their good behavior. And how it got the upper hand of your precedent order so well constituted before, if we may believe those men whose profession gives them cause to inquire most, it may be doubted there was in it the fraud of some old patentees and monopolizers in the trade of bookselling; who under pretence of the poor in their Company not to be defrauded, and the just retaining of each man his several copy (which God forbid should be gainsaid) brought divers glosing colors<sup>312</sup> to the House, which were indeed but colors, and serving to no end except it be to exercise a superiority over their neighbors; men who do not, therefore, labor in an honest profession to which learning is indebted, that they should be made other men's vassals. Another end is thought was aimed at by some of them in procuring by petition this Order, that having power in their hands, malignant books might the easier scape abroad, as the event shows.

But of these sophisms and elenchs<sup>313</sup> of merchandise I skill not. This I know, that errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almost incident; for what magistrate may not be misinformed and much the sooner, if liberty of printing be reduced into the power of a few; but to redress willingly and speedily what hath been erred,<sup>314</sup> and in highest authority to esteem a plain advertisement<sup>315</sup> more than others have done a sumptuous bribe, is a virtue, honored Lords and Commons, answerable to your highest actions, and whereof none can participate but greatest and wisest men.

<sup>312</sup> Cf. the use of colors in *Church Government* II, iii, and note 162.

<sup>313</sup> *elench*: "a fallacious answer to a sophistical question." (White.)

<sup>314</sup> *what hath been erred*: what mistakes have been made. Milton's construction is a Latinism.

<sup>315</sup> *advertisement*: intimation, notification.

THE  
TENURE OF KINGS AND MAGISTRATES:  
PROVING

THAT IT IS LAWFUL, AND HATH BEEN HELD SO THROUGH ALL AGES, FOR ANY WHO HAVE THE POWER, TO CALL TO ACCOUNT A TYRANT, OR WICKED KING, AND AFTER DUE CONVICTION, TO DEPOSE, AND PUT HIM TO DEATH, IF THE ORDINARY MAGISTRATE HAVE NEGLECTED, OR DENIED TO DO IT. AND THAT THEY WHO OF LATE SO MUCH BLAME DEPOSING, ARE THE MEN THAT DID IT THEMSELVES.

IF men within themselves would be governed by reason and not generally give up their understanding to a double tyranny, of custom from without and blind affections<sup>1</sup> within, they would discern better what it is to favor and uphold the tyrant of a nation. But, being slaves within doors, no wonder that they strive so much to have the public state conformably governed to the inward vicious rule by which they govern themselves.<sup>2</sup> For, indeed, none can love freedom heartily but good men. The rest love not freedom but licence, which never hath more scope or more indulgence than under tyrants. Hence is it that tyrants are not oft offended, nor stand much in doubt of bad men, as being all naturally servile,<sup>3</sup> but in whom virtue and true worth most is eminent, them they fear

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<sup>1</sup> *affections within*: passions. The words, coupled with *custom*, are a clear reference to the arguments of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. Cf. Introduction #49.

<sup>2</sup> The thought resembles Plato's account in the *Republic* VIII, 562e, of the anarchic temper entering every private house whenever tyranny is incipient in the state, and also his analysis there and in the *Gorgias* (510) of the vicious circle in which a tyrant and his unscrupulous supporters are involved.

<sup>3</sup> Allison cites Aristotle's *Politics* (V, ix, 12.): "Tyrants are always fond of bad men, because they love to be flattered, but no man who has the spirit of a free man in him will demean himself by flattery."



in earnest, as by right their masters; against them lies all their hatred and suspicion.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, neither do bad men hate tyrants, but have been always readiest with the falsified names of loyalty and obedience to color over their base compliances.

And although sometimes for shame, and when it comes to their own grievances, of purse especially, they would seem good patriots and side with the better cause, yet (when others for the deliverance of their country, endued with fortitude and heroic virtue<sup>5</sup> to fear nothing but the curse written against those "that do the work of the Lord negligently,"<sup>6</sup> would go on to remove not only the calamities and thraldoms of a people but the roots and causes whence they spring) straight these men, and sure helpers at need, as if they hated only the miseries but not the mischiefs, after they have juggled and paltered with the world, bandied and borne arms against their king, divested him, disanointed him, nay, cursed him all over in their pulpits and their pamphlets,<sup>7</sup> to the engaging of sincere and real men beyond what is possible or honest to retreat from, not only turn revolters from those principles which only could at first move them, but lay the stain of disloyalty and worse on those proceedings which are the necessary consequences of their own former actions; nor disliked by themselves, were they

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Sir Walter Raleigh's advice in *Maxims of State* (in a passage based on the context of this citation from Aristotle), "To cut off such as excel the rest in wealth, favour, or nobility, or be of a pregnant or aspiring wit, and so are fearful to a tyrant." (*Works of Raleigh*, edited by Birch, 1829, VIII, 23.)

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the appeal to the heroism of Parliament by John Gauden, D.D., in *The Religious and Loyal Protestation of John Gauden, Dr. in Divinitie: Against the present Declared Purposes and Proceedings of the Army and others: About the trying and destroying our Sovereign Lord the KING. Sent to a Collonell, to bee Presented to the Lord Fairfax, And his Councell of Warre, this fift of January, 1648*. Milton alludes to this tract several times below. It ends fulsomely in praise of Parliament when, at last, "the world shall see your power bounded with Loyalty, sanctified with Piety, and sweetened with Pitty, not foolish and *feminine*, which I would have below you, but *masculine*, Heroick, and truly Christian and Divine. . . ."

<sup>6</sup> The marginal note in the first and second editions refers to Jeremiah lxviii, 19. That chapter is a chain of curses on the Moabites.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Introduction #84 and 87.

managed to the entire advantages of their own faction; not considering the while that he toward whom they boasted their new fidelity, counted them accessory; and by those statutes and laws which they so impotently brandish against others, would have doomed them to a traitor's death for what they have done already.

'Tis true that most men are apt enough to civil wars and commotions as a novelty, and for a flash hot and active; but through sloth or inconstancy, and weakness of spirit, either fainting ere their own pretences, though never so just, be half attained, or through an inbred falsehood and wickedness, betray, oftentimes to destruction with themselves, men of noblest temper joined with them for causes whereof they in their rash undertakings were not capable.

If God and a good cause give them victory, the prosecution whereof for the most part inevitably draws after it the alteration of laws,<sup>8</sup> change of government, downfall of princes with their families—then comes the task to those worthies which are the soul of that enterprise, to be sweat and labored out amidst the throng and noises of vulgar and irrational men. Some contesting for privileges, customs,<sup>9</sup> forms, and that old entanglement of iniquity, their gibberish laws,<sup>10</sup> though the badge of their ancient slavery. Others, who have been fiercest against their prince under the notion of a tyrant, and no mean incendiaries of the war against him, when God out of his providence and high disposal hath delivered him into the hand of their brethren, on a sudden and in a new garb of allegiance, which their doings have long since cancelled, they plead for him, pity him, extol him, protest against those that talk of bringing him to the trial of justice, which is the sword of God, superior to all mortal things, in whose hand soever by apparent signs his testified will is to put it.

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<sup>8</sup> Milton was angry at changes of front by Presbyterian lawyers, like that which led Prynne to publish his *Declaration and Protestation of Will: Pryn and Clem: Walker* on 19 January, 1649, in contrast with his stand in 1643 in his *Sovereign Power of Parliaments*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Introduction #49.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Oratorical Performances*, p. 27.

But certainly, if we consider who and what they are, on a sudden grown so pitiful, we may conclude their pity can be no true and Christian commiseration, but either levity and shallowness of mind, or else a carnal admiring of that worldly pomp and greatness from whence they see him fallen; or rather, lastly, a dissembled and seditious pity, feigned of industry to beget new discord. As for mercy, if it be to a tyrant (under which name they themselves have cited him so oft in the hearing of God, of angels, and the holy church assembled,<sup>11</sup> and there charged him with the spilling of more innocent blood by far than ever Nero<sup>12</sup> did) undoubtedly the mercy which they pretend is the mercy of wicked men. And "their mercies," we read, "are cruelties;"<sup>13</sup> hazarding the welfare of a whole nation to have saved one whom so oft they have termed Agag,<sup>14</sup> and vilifying the blood of many Jonathans<sup>15</sup> that have saved Israel; insisting with much niceness<sup>16</sup> on the unnecessary clause of their covenant<sup>17</sup> wrested, wherein the fear of change and the absurd contradiction of a flattering hostility

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Introduction #87.

<sup>12</sup> Nero (37-68 A.D.), the traditional worst of all tyrants, had been compared with Charles in countless sermons. The Presbyterian clergy, Milton said in the first *Defence*, "kept preaching to their congregations that they were fighting not against a king, but against a greater tyrant than any Saul or Ahab, nay, one that out-Nero'd Nero." (C.E. VII, 61.)

<sup>13</sup> Proverbs xii, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Pulpit eloquence had often compared Charles to the Amalekite king Agag, whose life Saul spared in disobedience to God's command through the prophet Samuel, and whom Samuel "hewed . . . in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal." (I Sam. xv, 33.) Cf. note 85 below.

<sup>15</sup> See the chivalrous story of Jonathan's rout of an army of Philistines with "thirty thousand chariots" (I Sam. xiii, 5) that threatened to destroy Israel.

<sup>16</sup> *niceness*: scrupulosity.

<sup>17</sup> In the Solemn League and Covenant, copies of which had been signed both by most members of the English and Scottish Parliaments in 1643 and also by thousands of private men in the parishes of both countries, the pledge was "to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments, and the liberties of the Kingdoms, and to preserve and defend the King's Majesty's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true Religion and Liberties of the Kingdoms; that the world may bear witness with our consciences of our loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminish his Majesty's just power and greatness." Cf. Introduction #85-7, and *Areopagitica*, note 203.

had hampered them, but not scrupling to give away for compliments, to an implacable revenge, the heads of many thousand Christians more.<sup>18</sup>

Another sort there is, who (coming in the course of these affairs to have their share in great actions above the form of law or custom, at least to give their voice and approbation) begin to swerve and almost shiver at the majesty and grandeur of some noble deed,<sup>19</sup> as if they were newly entered into a great sin; disputing precedents, forms, and circumstances, when the commonwealth nigh perishes for want of deeds in substance, done with just and faithful expedition. To these I wish better instruction, and virtue equal to their calling; the former of which, that is to say, instruction, I shall endeavor, as my duty is, to bestow on them; and exhort them not to startle<sup>20</sup> from the just and pious resolution of adhering with all their strength and assistance to the present parliament and army in the glorious way wherein justice and victory hath set them—the only warrants through all ages, next under immediate revelation, to exercise supreme power—in those proceedings, which hitherto appear equal to what hath been done in any age or nation heretofore justly or magnanimously.<sup>21</sup>

Nor let them be discouraged or deterred by any new apostate scarecrows,<sup>22</sup> who, under show of giving counsel, send out

<sup>18</sup> The obscurity of the sentence comes from Milton's effort to appeal both to the fact that the English and Scottish Presbyterians were being converted to the king's cause by compliments which they should have been too proud to accept, and also to the fact that they were endangering the lives of English republicans at a moment when, like the signers of the Declaration of Independence, they should have remembered that those who do not hang together must hang separately.

<sup>19</sup> General Fairfax himself and some other army leaders were beginning to hesitate about proceeding to the extreme measures against Charles which had been envisaged on 16 November, 1648, in *A Remonstrance of his Excellency Thomas Lord Fairfax, Lord Generall of the Parliaments Forces. And of the Generall Councell of Officers Held at St. Albans*. Cf. note 5 above.

<sup>20</sup> *startle*: "to swerve, deviate from a purpose," says the *N.E.D.*, citing the present passage as the only example.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Introduction #66-7.

<sup>22</sup> The apostate scarecrow is William Prynne, whose ears had been cropped in 1637. Cf. note 8 above and Introduction #17.

their barking monitories and mementoes, empty of aught else but the spleen of a frustrated faction. For how can that pretended counsel be either sound or faithful, when they that give it see not, for madness and vexation of their ends lost, that those statutes and scriptures which both falsely and scandalously they wrest against their friends and associates, would, by sentence of the common adversary, fall first and heaviest upon their own heads? Neither let mild and tender dispositions be foolishly softened from their duty and perseverance with the unmasculine rhetoric<sup>23</sup> of any puling priest or chaplain, sent as a friendly letter of advice—for fashion sake in private—and forthwith published by the sender himself that we may know how much of friend there was in it, to cast an odious envy upon them to whom it was pretended to be sent in charity. Nor let any man be deluded by either the ignorance or the notorious hypocrisy and self-repugnance of our dancing divines,<sup>24</sup> who have the conscience and the boldness to come with scripture in their mouths, glossed and fitted for their turns with a double contradictory sense, transforming the sacred verity of God to an idol with two faces, looking at once two several ways; and with the same quotations to charge others, which in the same case they made serve to justify themselves. For while the hope to be made classic and provincial lords<sup>25</sup> led them on, while pluralities greased them thick and

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<sup>23</sup> Allison points out the unmistakable thrust at the paragraph from Gauden quoted in note 5 above. Gauden's Royalist sympathies did not prevent him from maintaining his influence with many powerful men on the other side. After the Restoration he claimed large credit for *Eikon Basilike*, to which Milton's *Eikonoklastes* was the official reply. He died in 1662 as Bishop of Worcester. Cf. note 85 below.

<sup>24</sup> The reference is to the letter sent on 15 January, 1648, *To the Right Honourable, the Lord Fairfax, and his Councill of Warre, the Humble Addresse of Henry Hammond*. As one of the best scholars and most disinterested clergymen on the royal side Hammond had great influence generally, and especially with Fairfax, who protected him against Parliament several times while he was serving as Charles's personal chaplain.

<sup>25</sup> Under the national General Assembly the church under Presbyterian organization at this time was divided into Provincial, and they in turn into Classical Assemblies or *Classes*. Cf. the "classic Hierarchy" in Milton's sonnet "On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament."

deep to the shame and scandal of religion more than all the sects and heresies they exclaim against—then to fight against the king's person, and no less a party of his lords and commons, or to put force upon both the houses, was good, was lawful, was no resisting of superior powers. They only were powers not to be resisted, who countenanced the good, and punished the evil.

But now that their censorious domineering is not suffered to be universal, truth and conscience to be freed, tithes<sup>26</sup> and pluralities<sup>27</sup> to be no more, though competent allowance provided and the warm experience of large gifts, and they so good at taking them—yet now to exclude and seize upon impeached members,<sup>28</sup> to bring delinquents without exemption to a fair tribunal by the common national law against murder, is now to be no less than Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.<sup>29</sup> He who but erewhile in the pulpits was a cursed tyrant, an enemy to God and saints, laden with all the innocent blood spilt in three kingdoms, and so to be fought against, is now, though nothing penitent or altered from his first principles, a lawful magistrate, a sovereign lord, the Lord's anointed,<sup>30</sup> not to be touched, though by themselves imprisoned. As if this only were obedience, to preserve the mere useless bulk of his person, and that

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<sup>26</sup> *tithes*: tax levies for the support of the church. Literally the word means 'tenths,' implying the continuance of the contribution of a tenth of the Hebrew's income, under the law of Moses, for the maintenance of the priests. "Under the law," said Milton in *Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church*, God "gave them tithes; under the gospel, having left all things in his church to charity and Christian freedom, he hath given them only what is justly given them." (C.E. VI, 50-1.)

<sup>27</sup> *pluralities*: Cf. *Church Government*, note 218.

<sup>28</sup> Milton referred to the eleven members of Parliament against whom the army presented formal charges of holding correspondence with the Queen, etc. on 6 July, 1647, and who later either fled or were impeached and imprisoned.

<sup>29</sup> When Dathan and Abiram joined Korah in a revolt against Moses, we are told (Num. xvi, 32), "the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up." Cf. Introduction #87.

<sup>30</sup> David's sparing of his enemy, Saul, because he was "the Lord's anointed" (I Sam. xxiv, 10), was constantly quoted as an example that should guarantee the safety of Charles against his enemies. Cf. Introduction #89-91.

only in prison not in the field, and to disobey his commands, deny him his dignity and office, everywhere to resist his power but where they think it only surviving in their own faction.

But who in particular is a tyrant cannot be determined in a general discourse, otherwise than by supposition. His particular charge and the sufficient proof of it, must determine that; which I leave to magistrates,<sup>31</sup> at least to the uprighter sort of them and of the people, though in number less by many, in whom faction least hath prevailed above the law of nature and right reason,<sup>32</sup> to judge as they find cause. But this I dare own as part of my faith, that if such a one there be, by whose commission whole massacres<sup>33</sup> have been committed on his faithful subjects, his provinces offered to pawn or alienation,<sup>34</sup> as the hire of those whom he had solicited to come in and destroy whole cities and countries; be he king, or tyrant, or emperor, the sword of justice is above him, in whose hand soever is found sufficient power to avenge the effusion and so great a deluge of innocent blood. For if all human power to execute, not accidentally but intendedly, the wrath of God upon evil-doers without exception, be of God, then that power, whether ordinary or, if that fail, extraordinary, so executing that intent of God, is lawful and not to be resisted.

But to unfold more at large this whole question, though with all expedient brevity, I shall here set down from first beginning, the original of kings; how and wherefore exalted to that dignity above their brethren; and from thence shall prove that, turning to tyranny, they may be as lawfully deposed

<sup>31</sup> Milton stresses the Calvinistic principle that the deposition of a king by the proper magistrates is perfectly lawful. Cf. Introduction #88.

<sup>32</sup> Milton is thinking here of the Stoic conception of the law of nature, which Cicero stated in his *Republic* (III, xvii) to be one with right reason, universally diffused, unchanging and eternal, arousing men to duty by its command, and deterring them from dishonesty by its veto. In *A History of Political Theory* G. H. Sabine discusses Grotius' revival of this conception and quotes (p. 424) his paraphrase of these words of Cicero's as the basis of his theory of natural law. Cf. Introduction #96.

<sup>33</sup> See *Way*, note II.

<sup>34</sup> So in *Eikonoklastes*, xii, Milton recalled "those five counties . . . given to the Irish for other reason than the four Northern Counties . . . a little before offered to the Scots." (C.E. V, 192.)

and punished as they were at first elected. This I shall do by authorities and reasons, not learnt in corners among schisms and heresies, as our doubling divines are ready to calumniate, but fetched out of the midst of choicest and most authentic learning, and no prohibited authors,<sup>35</sup> nor many heathen, but Mosaical,<sup>36</sup> Christian, orthodoxal, and, which must needs be more convincing to our adversaries, presbyterial.

No man who knows aught, can be so stupid to deny that all men naturally were born free,<sup>37</sup> being the image and resemblance of God himself, and were, by privilege above all the creatures, born to command, and not to obey; and that they lived so, till from the root of Adam's transgression falling among themselves to do wrong and violence, and foreseeing that such courses must needs tend to the destruction of them all, they agreed by common league<sup>38</sup> to bind each other from mutual injury, and jointly to defend themselves against any that gave disturbance or opposition to such agreement. Hence came cities, towns, and commonwealths. And because no faith in all was found sufficiently binding, they saw it needful to ordain some authority that might restrain by force and punish what was violated against peace and common right.

This authority and power of self-defence and preservation being originally and naturally in every one of them, and unitedly in them all, for ease, for order, and lest each man should be his own partial judge, they communicated and

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<sup>35</sup> For the basis of this avoidance of any appeal to the Church Fathers see the Introduction #24.

<sup>36</sup> *Mosaical*: founded on the Law of Moses. See the Introduction #92-4.

<sup>37</sup> Milton is thinking not only of this principle in Roman law, as, for example, it was stated in the *Institutes* of Justinian (I, ii, 2, to which Allison refers), but also of Adam's supposed absolute moral freedom in Eden and of the command that he had of the "beasts of the field." Even a later contemporary with scientific leanings like Joseph Glanvill could write, "We are not now like the creatures we were made, and have not only lost our *Makers* image, but *our own*: And do not much more transcend the creatures, which *God* and nature have plac'd at our feet, then we come short of our antient selves." (*The Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661, p. 12.) Cf. *Of Education*, note 7, and Introduction #74 and 110.

<sup>38</sup> See the Introduction #86-8.



derived either to one whom for the eminence of his wisdom and integrity they chose above the rest, or to more than one whom they thought of equal deserving. The first was called a king,<sup>39</sup> the other, magistrates: not to be their lords and masters (though afterward those names in some places were given voluntarily to such as had been authors of inestimable good to the people), but to be their deputies and commissioners, to execute, by virtue of their intrusted power, that justice which else every man by the bond of nature and of covenant must have executed for himself, and for one another. And to him that shall consider well why among free persons one man by civil right should bear authority and jurisdiction over another, no other end or reason can be imaginable.

These for a while governed well and with much equity decided all things at their own arbitrement, till the temptation of such a power, left absolute in their hands, perverted them at length to injustice and partiality. Then did they who now by trial had found the danger and inconveniences of committing arbitrary power to any, invent laws, either framed or consented to by all, that should confine and limit the authority of whom they chose to govern them: that so man, of whose failing they had proof, might no more rule over them, but law and reason, abstracted as much as might be from personal errors and frailties: while, as the magistrate was set above the people, so the law was set above the magistrate.<sup>40</sup> When this would not serve, but that the law was either not executed, or misapplied, they were constrained from that time, the only remedy left them, to put conditions and take oaths<sup>41</sup> from all

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<sup>39</sup> The tone here is like Aristotle's in describing the primitive kings of heroic times whose merits made them generals, administrators, and priests until, little by little, the development of civilization deprived their heirs of most of their power. (*Politics* III, ix.)

<sup>40</sup> Cf. the first *Defence*, iii, where in discussing Romans xii, 1-2, Milton cites Plato's *Laws* as ranking law above all magistrates, and continues, "Aristotle is of the same opinion in his *Politics*, and so is Cicero in his *Laws*." (C.E. VII, 167.) Here he paraphrases Cicero's *Laws* III, i. Cf. *Church Government*, note 228, and Introduction, #89.

<sup>41</sup> oaths: the coronation oaths taken by most European kings. One of the demands of *A Remonstrance of his Excellency Thomas Lord Fairfax*,

kings and magistrates at their first instalment to do impartial justice by law: who, upon those terms and no other, received allegiance from the people, that is to say, bond or covenant to obey them in execution of those laws which they, the people, had themselves made or assented to. And this oftentimes with express warning, that if the king or magistrate proved unfaithful to his trust, the people would be disengaged.

They added also counsellors and parliaments, not to be only at his beck,<sup>42</sup> but, with him or without him, at set times, or at all times when any danger threatened, to have care of the public safety. Therefore saith Claudius Sesell,<sup>43</sup> a French statesman, "The parliament was set as a bridle to the king;" which I instance rather, not because our English lawyers have not said the same long before, but because that French monarchy is granted by all to be a far more absolute than ours. That this and the rest of what hath hitherto been spoken is most true, might be copiously made appear throughout all stories, heathen and Christian; even of those nations where kings and emperors have sought means to abolish all ancient memory of the people's right by their encroachments and usurpations. But I spare long insertions, appealing to the known constitutions of both the latest Christian empires in Europe,

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*Lord Generall of the Parliaments Forces. And of the Generall Councell of Officers Held at St. Albans the 16 November, 1648, was: "That no King be hereafter admitted, but upon the election of, and as a trust from the People, . . . nor without first disclaiming and disavowing all pretence to a negative voyce, against the determinations of the . . . Commons in Parliament; and that to be done in some certain form, more clear then heretofore in the coronation Oath."* (P. 67.)

<sup>42</sup> One of the grievances against Charles was his abuse of the exclusive royal right to summon Parliament, to rule for long periods without permitting Parliament to meet. Cf. *Areopagitica*, note 15.

<sup>43</sup> In his *Commonplace Book*, under "The King of England," Milton had inscribed this recollection of Plato's *Laws* in *La grant monarchie de France composée par missire Claude de Seyssel*. Seyssel (1450?-1520) was a striking authority to quote here, for his two great historical works were tributes to Louis XII, whom he represented at the court of Henry VII of England and served as Councillor of State. His works on feudal and civil law and his long career as professor of law and finally as Archbishop at Turin added to his authority.

the Greek and the German, besides the French, Italian,<sup>44</sup> Arragonian,<sup>45</sup> English, and not least the Scottish<sup>46</sup> histories: not forgetting this only by the way, that William the Norman, though a conqueror, and not unsworn at his coronation, was compelled the second time to take oath at St. Albans<sup>47</sup> ere the people would be brought to yield obedience.

It being thus manifest that the power of kings and magistrates is nothing else but what is only derivative, transferred, and committed to them in trust from the people to the common good of them all, in whom the power yet remains fundamentally and cannot be taken from them without a violation of their natural birthright, and seeing that from hence Aristotle, and the best of political writers, have defined a king, "him who governs to the good and profit of his people, and not for his own ends"<sup>48</sup>—it follows from necessary causes that the titles of sovereign lord, natural lord, and the like, are either arrogancies or flatteries, not admitted by emperors and kings of best note, and disliked by the church both of Jews (Isa. xxvi. 13)<sup>49</sup> and ancient Christians, as appears by Tertullian<sup>50</sup> and

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<sup>44</sup> In *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, "Written by I. Bodin a famous Lawyer, and a man of great Experience in matters of State," II, vi, aristocracy is defined in Aristotle's terms as government by the best men, and the best example of it is recognized in the German empire, where the seven electoral princes choose the emperor, and "even the imperiall cities (are) also to be gouerned in manner and form of pure Aristocracies." (Richard Knolles' translation, London, 1606, p. 241.) Bodin's admiration for the Swiss aristocracy in Geneva, to which Milton refers in *Church Government* (see note 170), and for those in Venice and Genoa also figures here.

<sup>45</sup> Under the caption "King" in his *Commonplace Book* Milton had quoted the statement that the kings of Aragon do not have absolute power from the *History of Italy* by the great Florentine, Francesco di Piero di Iacopo Guicciardini (1483-1540), who was recording what he had observed as an ambassador at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella.

<sup>46</sup> See the Introduction #88.

<sup>47</sup> See the Introduction #86.

<sup>48</sup> This definition occurs in the *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII, xi, 1. Cf. the Introduction, #86.

<sup>49</sup> "O Lord, our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name."

<sup>50</sup> For Tertullian see *Doctrine and Discipline*, Preface, note 5. Here the allusion is to his book *On the Crown*, which closes with a promise of the

others. Although generally the people of Asia, and with them the Jews also, especially since the time they chose a king against the advice and counsel of God, are noted by wise authors much inclinable to slavery.<sup>51</sup>

Secondly, that to say, as is usual, the king hath as good right to his crown and dignity as any man to his inheritance, is to make the subject no better than the king's slave, his chattel, or his possession that may be bought and sold. And doubtless, if hereditary title were sufficiently inquired, the best foundation of it would be found either but in courtesy<sup>52</sup> or convenience.<sup>53</sup> But suppose it to be of right hereditary, what can be more just and legal, if a subject for certain crimes be to forfeit by law from himself and posterity all his inheritance to the king, than that a king, for crimes proportional,<sup>54</sup> should forfeit all his title and inheritance to the people? Unless the people must be thought created all for him, he not for them,

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crown of life to Christ's faithful servants, and indicts the vanity of the crowns of royalty, victory, and fashion that pagan tradition encouraged men and particularly women to wear. The book was written in 201 A.D.

<sup>51</sup> Bodin's list of absolute monarchs in his chapter on tyranny is interesting here, both for what it includes and excludes. It names "the true Monarches of Fraunce, of Spain, of England, Scotland, Turkie, Moschovie, Tartarie, Persia, Æthiopia, India, and of almost all the kingdomes of Affricke, and Asia, where the kings themselves have the soueraigntie without all doubt or question." (*Commonweale* II, v, p. 222.) Bodin's work was first published in French in 1577.

<sup>52</sup> Courtesy titles are still given to the heirs of English noblemen, and in Milton's time some estates were said to be held in courtesy.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Introduction #86.

<sup>54</sup> *proportional*: greater (than the crimes of private men) proportionately as Charles was greater than his subjects. In *King Charles his Case* (p. 39) John Cook, the barrister who rushed into print with the plea which the king's refusal to plead before the High Court of Justice prevented him from delivering as prosecutor at the bar, said: "And now, my Lord, I must as the truth is, conclude him guilty of more Transcendent Treasons, and Enormous Crimes, then all the Kings in this part of the World have ever been; And as he that would picture *Venus*, must take the eyes of one, the cheeks of another beautiful woman, and so other parts to make a compleat beauty: So to delineate an absolute Tyrant, the cruelty of *Richard* the third, and all the subtilty, treachery, deep dissimulation, abominable projects, and dishonorable shifts, that ever were separately in any that swayed the English Scepter, conspired together to make their habitation in this Whited-wal."

and they all in one body inferior to him single; which were a kind of treason against the dignity of mankind to affirm.

Thirdly, it follows that to say kings are accountable to none but God, is the overturning of all law and government. For if they may refuse to give account, then all covenants made with them at coronation, all oaths are in vain, and mere mockeries, all laws which they swear to keep, made to no purpose: for if the king fear not God (as how many of them do not?) we hold then our lives and estates by the tenure of his mere grace and mercy, as from a god, not a mortal magistrate—a position that none but court-parasites or men besotted would maintain. Aristotle, therefore, whom we commonly allow for one of the best interpreters of nature and morality, writes in the fourth of his *Politics*, chap. x. that “monarchy unaccountable is the worst sort of tyranny, and least of all to be endured by free-born men.”

And surely no Christian prince, not drunk with high mind and prouder than those pagan Cæsars that deified themselves,<sup>55</sup> would arrogate so unreasonably above human condition, or derogate so basely from a whole nation of men, his brethren, as if for him only subsisting, and to serve his glory; valuing them in comparison of his own brute will and pleasure no more than so many beasts, or vermin under his feet, not to be reasoned with, but to be trod on; among whom there might be found so many thousand men for wisdom, virtue, nobleness of mind, and all other respects but the fortune of his dignity, far above him. Yet some would persuade us that this absurd opinion was King David’s, because in the 51 Psalm he cries out to God, “Against thee only have I sinned”;<sup>56</sup> as if David had imagined that to murder Uriah and adulterate his wife had been no sin against his neighbor, whenas that law of Moses was to the king expressly (Deut. xvii.), not to think

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<sup>55</sup> At the death of Julius Caesar the deification of the Roman emperors began, and the grant of the half-divine title of Augustus to his successor was a further step toward the recognition of the emperors as divine, which became usual at the elevation of every new caesar.

<sup>56</sup> See the Introduction #91.

so highly of himself above his brethren. David, therefore, by those words could mean no other than either that the depth of his guiltiness was known to God only, or to so few as had not the will or power to question him, or that the sin against God was greater beyond compare than against Uriah. Whatever his meaning were, any wise man will see that the pathetical words of a psalm can be no certain decision to a point that hath abundantly more certain rules to go by.

How much more rationally spake the heathen king Demophoön, in a tragedy of Euripides, than these interpreters would put upon king David! "I rule not my people by tyranny, as if they were barbarians, but am myself liable, if I do unjustly, to suffer justly."<sup>57</sup> Not unlike was the speech of Trajan,<sup>58</sup> the worthy emperor, to one whom he made general of his prætorian forces: "Take this drawn sword," saith he, "to use for me if I reign well; if not, to use against me." Thus Dion relates.<sup>59</sup> And not Trajan only, but Theodosius the younger,<sup>60</sup> a Christian emperor and one of the best, caused it to be enacted as a rule undeniable and fit to be acknowledged by all kings and emperors, that a prince is bound to the laws; that on the authority of law the authority of a prince depends, and to the laws ought submit. Which edict of his remains yet in the Code of Justinian,<sup>61</sup> (l. i. tit. 24) as a sacred constitution to all the succeeding emperors. How then can

<sup>57</sup> Again in the first *Defence* (C.E. VII, 311) Milton quotes Euripides' king, Demophoön, in the *Herachidae* (418-421) as professing to exercise no tyrannical power in Athens, nor to treat the citizens like aliens; but to treat men with the righteousness that he expected in return.

<sup>58</sup> Marcus Ulpius Nerva Trajan, emperor 98-117 A.D.

<sup>59</sup> Dio's *Roman History* LXVIII, xvi, tells the story just as Milton does. Its association with Theodosius is illuminated by the speech of Morton to the Scottish lords at Stirling which Milton found in Buchanan's *History of Scotland*, in the course of which Morton said: "For Trajan, when he deliver'd a Sword to the Governor of a certain City (according to Custom) is reported to say, *Use it either for me or against me, as I shall deserve.* Even Theodosius, a good Emperor in bad Times, would have it left recorded amongst his Sanctions and Laws, as a Speech worthy an Emperor, and greater than his Empire itself, to confess, *That he was inferior to the Laws.*" (Third Edition, 1733, Vol. II, p. 424.)

<sup>60</sup> Theodosius II was emperor in the east 401-50.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Of Education*, note 75 and note 37 above.

any king in Europe maintain and write himself accountable to none but God, when emperors in their own imperial statutes have written and decreed themselves accountable to law? And indeed where such account is not feared, he that bids a man reign over him above law, may bid as well a savage beast.

It follows, lastly, that since the king or magistrate holds his authority of the people, both originally and naturally for their good in the first place, and not his own, then may the people, as oft as they shall judge it for the best, either choose him or reject him, retain him or depose him, though no tyrant, merely by the liberty and right of freeborn men to be governed as seems to them best. This, though it cannot but stand with plain reason, shall be made good also by Scripture: (Deut. xvii. 14:) "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations about me." These words confirm us that the right of choosing, yea of changing their own government, is by the grant of God himself in the people. And therefore when they desired a king, though then under another form of government, and though their changing displeased him, yet he that was himself their king and rejected by them, would not be a hindrance to what they intended, further than by persuasion, but that they might do therein as they saw good (I Sam. viii.),<sup>62</sup> only he reserved to himself the nomination of who should reign over them. Neither did that exempt the king, as if he were to God only accountable, though by his especial command anointed. Therefore "David first made a covenant with the elders of Israel, and so was by them anointed king." (2 Sam. v. 3; 1 Chron. xi.) And Jehoiada the priest, making Jehoash king, made a covenant between him and the people. (2 Kings, xi. 17.) Therefore when Roboam, at his coming to the crown, rejected those conditions which the Israelites brought him, hear what they answer him: "What portion have we in David, or inheritance in the son of Jesse? See to thine own house,

<sup>62</sup> The Biblical story represents Samuel as warning the Hebrews of the tyranny to be expected from kings. Cf. Introduction #90.

David." And for the like conditions not performed, all Israel before that time deposed Samuel, not for his own default, but for the misgovernment of his sons.

But some will say to both these examples, it was evilly done. I answer that not the latter, because it was expressly allowed them in the law to set up a king if they pleased; and God himself joined with them in the work, though in some sort it was at that time displeasing to him, in respect of old Samuel, who had governed them uprightly. As Livy praises the Romans, who took occasion from Tarquinius,<sup>63</sup> a wicked prince, to gain their liberty, which to have extorted, saith he, from Numa,<sup>64</sup> or any of the good kings before, had not been seasonable. Nor was it in the former example done unlawfully; for when Roboam had prepared a huge army to reduce the Israelites, he was forbidden by the prophet: (I Kings, xii. 24) "Thus saith the Lord, ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren, for this thing is from me." He calls them their brethren, not rebels, and forbids to be proceeded against them, owning the thing himself, not by single providence but by approbation, and that not only of the act, as in the former example, but of the fit season also. He had not otherwise forbid to molest them. And those grave and wise counsellors whom Rehoboam first advised with, spake no such thing as our old grey-headed flatterers now are wont:—"Stand upon your birthright, scorn to capitulate; you hold of God, not of them." For they knew no

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<sup>63</sup> The association of the Roman tyrant, Tarquin, with the Biblical tyrant, Rehoboam, was traditional. In *The Original and End of Civil Power* (Dunham and Pargellis, *Complaint and Reform*, pp. 568-9) Anthony Ascham recalled the deposition of Tarquin the Proud by the Romans, and then added: "lest this instance should be thought unwarrantable, take a Scripture pattern for it: you shall find in the first of Kings, chap. 12, that Rehoboam king of Israel . . . spoke roughly to the people . . . and said . . . I will chastise you with scorpions. But what follows: what portion (say the people) have we . . . in the son of Jesse? To your tents, O Israel, &c. And so they shook off Rehoboam's tyrannical yoke."

<sup>64</sup> According to the story which opens Livy's second book, Numa, who succeeded Romulus as king of Rome, was directed in the founding of Roman religious worship by the nymph, Egeria, and had an heroic and saintly reign of about forty years. For Livy, see *Arcopagitica*, note 62.



such matter, unless conditionally, but gave him politic counsel as in a civil transaction.

Therefore kingdom and magistracy, whether supreme or subordinate, is without difference called "a human ordinance," (I Pet. ii. 13, &c.,) which we are there taught is the will of God we should alike submit to, so far as for the punishment of evil-doers and the encouragement of them that do well. "Submit," saith he, "as free men."<sup>65</sup> But to any civil power unaccountable, unquestionable, and not to be resisted, no, not in wickedness and violent actions, how can we submit as free men? "There is no power but of God," saith Paul (Rom. xiii.), as much as to say God put it into man's heart to find out that way at first for common peace and preservation, approving the exercise thereof; else it contradicts Peter, who calls the same authority an ordinance of man. It must be also understood of lawful and just power, else we read of great power in the affairs and kingdoms of the world permitted to the devil: for saith he to Christ (Luke, iv. 6), "All this power will I give thee and the glory of them, for it is delivered to me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it:"<sup>66</sup> neither did he lie, or Christ gainsay what he affirmed; for in the thirteenth of the Revelation, we read how the dragon gave to the beast "his power, his seat, and great authority:" which beast so authorized most expound to be the tyrannical powers and kingdoms of the earth.<sup>67</sup> Therefore Saint Paul in the forecited chapter tells us that such magistrates he means as are not a terror to the

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<sup>65</sup> "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

"Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."

Similarly *The unlimited Prerogative of Kings subverted* (1642, anonymous, p. B3r) interprets these verses as explicitly making kings a human institution, and warns them that, because they are properly subject to their subjects and to their subjects' representative assemblies, Romans xiii, 1 applies first of all to them. Cf. Roger Williams' interest in this passage from I Peter ii, in Introduction #89. Also Milton's recurrence to it in the first *Defence*, C.E. VII, 161-9.

<sup>66</sup> The words are the devil's to Christ in the second temptation.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Introduction #22.

good, but to the evil; such as bear not the sword in vain, but to punish offenders and to encourage the good.<sup>68</sup>

If such only be mentioned here as powers to be obeyed, and our submission to them only required, then doubtless those powers that do the contrary are no powers ordained of God, and by consequence no obligation laid upon us to obey or not to resist them. And it may be well observed that both these apostles, whenever they give this precept, express it in terms not concrete<sup>69</sup> but abstract, as logicians are wont to speak; that is, they mention the ordinance, the power, the authority, before the persons that execute it, and what that power is, lest we should be deceived, they describe exactly. So that if the power be not such, or the person execute not such power, neither the one nor the other is of God, but of the devil, and by consequence to be resisted. From this exposition Chrysostom<sup>70</sup> also, on the same place, dissents not, explaining that these words were not written in behalf of a tyrant. And this is verified by David, himself a king, and likeliest to be author of the Psalm (xciv. 20) which saith, "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee?" And it were worth the knowing, since kings in these days, and that by Scripture, boast the justness of their title by holding it immediately of God,<sup>71</sup> yet cannot show the time when God ever set on the throne them or their forefathers, but only when the people chose them; why by the same reason, since God ascribes as oft to himself the casting down of

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<sup>68</sup> Romans xiii, 4.

<sup>69</sup> Mr. Allison's note points out that both the following quotation from Chrysostom's *Homilies* (23) and the distinction made here come from Buchanan's *De Jure*, p. 166. Of Romans xiii, 1-3, Buchanan says, "Paul therefore does not treat of the magistracy, that is of the function or duty of the person who presides over others, nor of this or of that species of magistracy, but of every possible form of government." Cf. Introduction #88.

<sup>70</sup> For Chrysostom see *Arcopagitica*, note 40.

<sup>71</sup> "Royalty is an Honour wherein Kings are stated *immediately* from God," said Roger Maynwaring in *Religion and Allegiance* (1627, p. 13). "Fathers they are, and who gave Fathers authority over their Families but hee alone from whom all the *Fatherhood in heaven and earth is named?*" Cf. Introduction #89.

princes<sup>72</sup> from the throne, it should not be thought as lawful and as much from God, when none are seen to do it but the people and that for just causes. For if it needs must be a sin in them to depose, it may as likely be a sin to have elected. And contrary, if the people's act in election be pleaded by a king as the act of God and the most just title to enthrone him, why may not the people's act of rejection be as well pleaded by the people as the act of God and the most just reason to depose him? So that we see the title and just right of reigning or deposing, in reference to God, is found in Scripture to be all one; visible only in the people, and depending merely upon justice and demerit. Thus far hath been considered briefly the power of kings and magistrates, how it was and is originally the people's, and by them conferred in trust only to be employed to the common peace and benefit; with liberty therefore and right remaining in them to reassume it to themselves, if by kings or magistrates it be abused, or to dispose of it by any alteration, as they shall judge most conducing to the public good.

We may from hence with more ease and force of argument determine what a tyrant is, and what the people may do against him. A tyrant, whether by wrong or by right coming to the crown, is he who, regarding neither law nor the common good, reigns only for himself and his faction: thus St. Basil,<sup>73</sup> among others, defines him. And because his power is great, his will boundless and exorbitant, the fulfilling whereof is for the most part accompanied with innumerable wrongs and oppressions of the people, murders, massacres, rapes, adulteries, desolation, and subversion of cities and whole provinces—look, how great a good and happiness a just king is, so great a mischief is a

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<sup>72</sup> "He leadeth the princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the almighty." Job xii, 19.

<sup>73</sup> For Basil see *Areopagitica*, note 97. Milton quoted his definition of a tyrant at the head of this division of his tract probably because he remembered it from his entries under that caption in his *Commonplace Book* (C.E. XVIII, 180). First among the "others" of course comes Aristotle's definition in *Politics* IV, viii, as irresponsible monarchy over subjects who are equal or superior to their ruler, not for their interest, but for the ruler's.

tyrant; as he the public father of his country, so this the common enemy. Against whom what the people lawfully may do, as against a common pest and destroyer of mankind, I suppose no man of clear judgment need go further to be guided than by the very principles of nature in him.<sup>74</sup>

But because it is the vulgar folly of men to desert their own reason and shutting their eyes, to think they see best with other men's, I shall show by such examples as ought to have most weight with us, what hath been done in this case heretofore. The Greeks and Romans, as their prime authors witness, held it not only lawful, but a glorious and heroic deed rewarded publicly with statues and garlands,<sup>75</sup> to kill an infamous tyrant at any time without trial—and but reason, that he who trod down all law, should not be vouchsafed the benefit of law. Inso-much that Seneca, the tragedian, brings in Hercules,<sup>76</sup> the grand suppressor of tyrants, thus speaking:—

————— Victima haud ulla amplior  
Potest, magisque opima mactari Jovi  
Quam rex iniquus —————

————— There can be slain  
No sacrifice to God more acceptable  
Than an unjust and wicked king ———.

But of these I name no more, lest it be objected they were heathen; and come to produce another sort of men that had the knowledge of true religion. Among the Jews this custom of tyrant-killing was not unusual. First, Ehud,<sup>77</sup> a man

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Introduction #88.

<sup>75</sup> Milton doubtless thought, among others, of the bronze statues that were raised in 509 B.C. to Harmodius and Aristogeiton in memory of their assassination of Hipparchus, brother of the tyrant Hippias. When Xerxes removed the statues, new ones were set up in their place in the Agora, near the temple of Ares.

<sup>76</sup> The lines are 922–4 from the *Mad Hercules* of Seneca, the Stoic philosopher and essayist, whose years of service at the court of the tyrant Nero ended in his suicide in 65 A.D. Hercules is returning from the slaying of the tyrant Lycus when he chants the chorus of which the lines are a part.

<sup>77</sup> After “the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen

whom God had raised to deliver Israel from Eglon king of Moab, who had conquered and ruled over them eighteen years, being sent to him as an ambassador with a present, slew him in his own house. But he was a foreign prince, an enemy, and Ehud besides had special warrant from God. To the first I answer, it imports not whether foreign or native. For no prince so native but professes to hold by law; which when he himself overturns, breaking all the covenants and oaths that gave him title to his dignity and were the bond and alliance between him and his people, what differs he from an outlandish king<sup>78</sup> or from an enemy?

For look, how much right the king of Spain hath to govern us at all, so much right hath the king of England to govern us tyrannically. If he, though not bound to us by any league, coming from Spain in person to subdue us or to destroy us, might lawfully by the people of England either be slain in fight or put to death in captivity, what hath a native king to plead, bound by so many covenants, benefits, and honors, to the welfare of his people; why he (through the contempt of all laws and parliaments, the only tie of our obedience to him, for his own will's sake and a boasted prerogative<sup>79</sup> unaccountable) after seven years' warring and destroying of his best subjects, overcome and yielded prisoner,<sup>80</sup> should think to scape unquestionable as a thing divine, in respect of whom so many thousand Christians destroyed should lie unaccounted for, polluting with their slaughtered carcasses all the land over, and crying for vengeance against the living that should have righted them? Who knows not that there is a mutual bond of amity and brotherhood between man and man over all the

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years, . . . the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite." (Judg. iii, 14-15.)

<sup>78</sup> *outlandish*: foreign.

<sup>79</sup> *prerogative*: "That special pre-eminence which the sovereign, by right of regal dignity, has over all other persons and out of the course of common law." (N.E.D.) Cf. note 65 above.

<sup>80</sup> In May, 1646, Charles voluntarily gave himself up to the Scots, who held him prisoner until in January, 1647, they made terms with Parliament which required his surrender to the English.

world, neither is it the English sea that can sever us from that duty and relation? A straiter<sup>81</sup> bond yet there is between fellow-subjects, neighbors, and friends. But when any of these do one to another so as hostility could do no worse, what doth the law decree less against them than open enemies and invaders? Or if the law be not present or too weak, what doth it warrant us to less than single defence or civil war? And from that time forward the law of civil defensive war differs nothing from the law of foreign hostility. Nor is it distance of place that makes enmity, but enmity that makes distance. He, therefore, that keeps peace with me, near or remote, of whatsoever nation, is to me, as far as all civil and human offices, an Englishman and a neighbor. But if an Englishman, forgetting all laws, human, civil, and religious, offend against life and liberty, to him offended and to the law in his behalf, though born in the same womb, he is no better than a Turk, a Saracen, a heathen.

This is gospel and this was ever law among equals; how much rather then in force against any king whatever, who in respect of the people is confessed inferior and not equal: to distinguish, therefore, of a tyrant by outlandish, or domestic, is a weak evasion. To the second, that he was an enemy, I answer, "What tyrant is not?" Yet Eglon by the Jews had been acknowledged as their sovereign. They had served him eighteen years, as long almost as we our William the Conqueror,<sup>82</sup> in all which time he could not be so unwise a statesman but to have taken of them oaths of fealty<sup>83</sup> and allegiance,<sup>84</sup> by which they made themselves his proper subjects, as their homage and present sent by Ehud testified. To the third, that he had special warrant to kill Eglon in that manner, it cannot be granted because not expressed. 'Tis plain that he was raised by God to be a deliverer, and went on just principles

<sup>81</sup> *straiter*: closer, narrower.

<sup>82</sup> William the Conqueror reigned from 1066 to 1087.

<sup>83</sup> *fealty*: "The obligation of fidelity on the part of a feudal tenant or vassal to his lord." (N.E.D.)

<sup>84</sup> *allegiance*: "The relation or duties of a liegeman to his liege-lord; the tie or obligation of a subject to his sovereign, or government." (N.E.D.)

such as were then and ever held allowable to deal so by a tyrant that could no otherwise be dealt with.

Neither did Samuel, though a prophet, with his own hand abstain from Agag,<sup>85</sup> a foreign enemy no doubt, but mark the reason: "As thy sword hath made women childless," a cause that by the sentence of law itself nullifies all relations. And as the law is between brother and brother, father and son, master and servant, wherefore not between king, or rather tyrant, and people? And whereas Jehu<sup>86</sup> had special command to slay Jehoram,<sup>87</sup> a successive and hereditary tyrant, it seems not the less imitable for that. For where a thing grounded so much on natural reason hath the addition of a command from God, what does it but establish the lawfulness of such an act? Nor it is likely that God, who had so many ways of punishing the house of Ahab, would have sent a subject against his prince, if the fact in itself, as done to a tyrant, had been of bad example. And if David refused to lift his hand against the Lord's anointed,<sup>88</sup> the matter between them was not tyranny, but private enmity, and David, as a private person, had been his own revenger, not so much the people's: but when any tyrant at this day can show to be the Lord's anointed, the only mentioned reason why David withheld his hand, he may then, but not till then, presume on the same privilege.

We may pass, therefore, hence to Christian times. And first, our Saviour himself, how much he favored tyrants and

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<sup>85</sup> Cf. note 14 above. So popular was Agag's case among the republicans that Dr. Gauden admonished Parliament to "keepe their mortified and subdued wills, as *David* did, when hee had to the personall injuries offer'd to him, the advantages added both of Power and Oportunity against King *Saul*; for that of *Samuel's* severity against *Agag*, you know that neither is the King an *Agag* to you, nor you as *Samuel* to him." (Gauden's *Religious Protestation*, p. 5 [7]. Cf. notes 5 and 23 above.)

<sup>86</sup> Jehu is described as a mere captain when he is anointed king of Israel and told by the prophet to "smite the house of Ahab thy master." (II Kings ix, 7.)

<sup>87</sup> Jehu, after dispatching Ahab, had a famous encounter with his son Jehoram, or Joram, killing him with an arrow as he fled in his chariot. (II Kings ix, 24.)

<sup>88</sup> Cf. note 85 above.

how much intended they should be found or honored among Christians, declares his mind not obscurely; accounting their absolute authority no better than Gentilism,<sup>89</sup> yea, though they flourished it over with the splendid name of benefactors;<sup>90</sup> charging those that would be his disciples to usurp no such dominion; but that they who were to be of most authority among them, should esteem themselves ministers and servants to the public, Matt. xx. 25, "The princes of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them," and Mark x. 42. "They that seem to rule," saith he, either slighting or accounting them no lawful rulers; "but ye shall not be so, but the greatest among you shall be your servant." And although he himself were the meekest and came on earth to be so, yet to a tyrant we hear him not vouchsafe an humble word but, "Tell that fox," Luke xiii.<sup>91</sup> So far we ought to be from thinking that Christ and his gospel should be made a sanctuary for tyrants from justice, to whom his law before never gave such protection. And wherefore did his mother, the Virgin Mary,<sup>92</sup> give such praise to God in her prophetic song, that he had now, by the coming of Christ, "cut down dynastas"<sup>93</sup> or proud monarchs from the throne," if the church, when God manifests his power in them to do so, should rather choose all misery and vassalage to serve them, and let them still sit on their potent seats to be adored for doing mischief?

Surely it is not for nothing that tyrants, by a kind of natural instinct, both hate and fear none more than the true church and saints of God, as the most dangerous enemies and sub-

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. Introduction #92.

<sup>90</sup> "They that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors." (Luke xxii, 25.) In this speech Christ referred to titles like *euergetes*, the benefactor, and *soter*, the saviour, which were assumed in spite of their traditional attribution to some of the Greek gods, by some of the Ptolemies in Egypt.

<sup>91</sup> Christ's reply to the Pharisees when they tell him that king Herod will kill him. (Luke xiii, 32.)

<sup>92</sup> Mary's words in the Magnificat, or song of thanksgiving after the Annunciation: "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree."

<sup>93</sup> Milton kept the Greek accusative form of the original.



verters of monarchy, though indeed of tyranny.<sup>94</sup> Hath not this been the perpetual cry of courtiers and court-prelates? Whereof no likelier cause can be alleged but that they well discerned the mind and principles of most devout and zealous men, and indeed the very discipline of church, tending to the dissolution of all tyranny.<sup>95</sup> No marvel then if since the faith of Christ received, in purer or impurer times, to depose a king and put him to death for tyranny, hath been accounted so just and requisite that neighbor kings have both upheld and taken part with subjects in the action. And Ludovicus Pius,<sup>96</sup> himself an emperor, and son of Charles the Great,<sup>97</sup> being made judge (du Haillan<sup>98</sup> is my author) between Milegast, king of the Vultzes, and his subjects, who had deposed him, gave his verdict for the subjects and for him whom they had chosen in his room. Note here that the right of electing whom they please is, by the impartial testimony of an emperor, in the people: for, said he, "A just prince ought to be preferred before an unjust, and the end of government before the prerogative."<sup>99</sup> And Constantinus Leo,<sup>100</sup> another emperor, in the Byzantine laws saith, "That the end of a king is for the

<sup>94</sup> *though indeed of tyranny; i.e., as they really are of tyranny, though not of lawful monarchy.*

<sup>95</sup> Cf. *Way*, note 133, and Introduction #18-29.

<sup>96</sup> Louis the Pious (Holy Roman Emperor, 814-840) has the brief entry of his judgment approving the deposition of Milegast, described there simply as "a certain German tyrant," entered among the notes on *Tyrannus* in Milton's *Commonplace Book*. (C.E. XVIII, 182.)

<sup>97</sup> Charlemagne (742-814) became emperor in 800.

<sup>98</sup> The *Commonplace Book* often cites Bernard de Girard, seigneur du Haillan (1535-1610), who was royal historiographer under Charles IX and Henri III. Milton cites the most considerable of his many works, the *General History of the Kings of France, . . . from Pharamond to Charles VII.*

<sup>99</sup> A note in the *Commonplace Book* (C.E. XVIII, 175) refers to this definition from du Haillan.

<sup>100</sup> Constantine Leo, the Isaurian (680-740) rose to distinction as a general and became Emperor of the East in 717. Milton would admire his revision of the Code of Justinian for its reforms of the marriage laws and its betterment of the condition of serfs, whom it sought to raise to the status of tenants.

general good, which he not performing, is but the counterfeit of a king."<sup>101</sup>

And to prove that some of our own monarchs have acknowledged that their high office exempted them not from punishment, they had the sword of St. Edward<sup>102</sup> borne before them by an officer, who was called earl of the palace, even at the times of their highest pomp and solemnities, to mind them, saith Matthew Paris,<sup>103</sup> the best of our historians, "that if they erred, the sword had power to restrain them." And what restraint the sword comes to at length, having both edge and point, if any sceptic will doubt, let him feel. It is also affirmed from diligent search made in our ancient books of law<sup>104</sup> that the peers<sup>105</sup> and barons of England had a legal right to judge the king, which was the cause most likely (for it could be no slight cause) that they were called his peers or equals. This, however, may stand immovable, so long as man hath to deal with no better than man; that if our law judge all men to the lowest by their peers,<sup>106</sup> it should in all equity ascend also and judge the highest.

<sup>101</sup> This entry is also a reminiscence of the *Commonplace Book* (C.E. XVIII, 174.)

<sup>102</sup> King Edward the Confessor (1004-1066), the last of the Saxon kings of England.

<sup>103</sup> Matthew Paris (1200?-1259) describes the Earl of Chester at the wedding of Henry III, carrying "the sword of St. Edward, which was called 'Curtein,' before the king, as a sign that he was earl of the palace, and had by right the power of restraining the king if he should commit an error." (*English History*, translated by J. A. Giles, 1852, I, 9.)

<sup>104</sup> *our ancient books of law*: identified in the first *Defence* as *The Mirror of Justice* and quoted as recognizing that "the king has his peers, who in Parliament have cognizance and jurisdiction 'if the king have done any wrong to any of his people.'" (C.E. VII, 447.)

<sup>105</sup> *peers*: members of any of the five orders of the British nobility; dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, or barons. "Dukes, earls, marquises, etc. were not hereditary at first, but only places of government and office in the time of Charles the Great," Milton wrote in the *Commonplace Book* (C.E. XVIII, 195), citing Girard. Here and in the first *Defence* (C.E. VII, 443), where he again cites Matthew Paris's account of the earl of Chester's act as mayor of the palace, he is arguing from the French tradition that the twelve peers (*pairs*) of Charlemagne were given that title to indicate that they were the emperor's equals.

<sup>106</sup> A reference to the right of every subject by English common law to be judged by his peers.

And so much I find both in our own and foreign story, that dukes, earls, and marquises were at first not hereditary, not empty and vain titles, but names of trust and office; and with the office ceasing, as induces me to be of opinion that every worthy man in parliament (for the word baron<sup>107</sup> imports no more) might for the public good be thought a fit peer and judge of the king, without regard had to petty caveats<sup>108</sup> and circumstances, the chief impediment in high affairs, and ever stood upon most by circumstantial men. Whence doubtless our ancestors who were not ignorant with what rights either nature or ancient constitution had endowed them, when oaths both at coronation and renewed in parliament would not serve, thought it no way illegal to depose and put to death their tyrannous kings. Insomuch that the parliament drew up a charge against Richard the Second,<sup>109</sup> and the commons requested to have judgment decreed against him that the realm might not be endangered. And Peter Martyr,<sup>110</sup> a divine of foremost rank, on the third of Judges, approves their doings. Sir Thomas Smith also,<sup>111</sup> a protestant and a statesman, in

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<sup>107</sup> *baron*: "Originally, one who held, by military or other honorable service, from the king or other superior." (N.E.D.)

<sup>108</sup> *caveats*: "A process in court to suspend proceedings." (N.E.D.)

<sup>109</sup> In Holinshed's *Chronicles of England*, Richard II (1377-1399) is so treated as to justify Milton's entry in the *Commonplace Book* (C.E. XVIII, 182) describing him as "not only depos'd by parliament, but sute made by the commons that he might have judgement decreed against him to avoid furdur mischeif in the realm."

<sup>110</sup> Peter Martyr (Pietro Martire Vermigli, 1500-1562) was an Italian convert to the Reformation who became professor of Hebrew at Geneva and later at Oxford, where he had an active part in the movement for the reform of the English church from 1548 until Mary's accession made his return to the Continent convenient. His discussion of the election and impeachment of kings in his commentary on Judges is summarized in Milton's *Commonplace Book* (C.E. XVIII, 182-3).

<sup>111</sup> As an effective leader of the Reformers under Edward VI and even in "Bloody" Mary's Parliament, as one of the outstanding figures in English diplomatic history under Elizabeth, and as her secretary of state, Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577) was one of the most influential minds of the preceding century. The passage which Milton quotes from his *The Commonwealth of England* (first published in Latin in 1583) occurs in the opening pages of the book, in which he defines a king, as opposed to a tyrant, as one who "doth administer the Common-wealth by the lawes of

his *Commonwealth of England*, putting the question whether it be lawful to rise against a tyrant, answers that the vulgar judge of it according to the event, and the learned according to the purpose of them that do it.

But far before those days, Gildas,<sup>112</sup> the most ancient of all our historians, speaking of those times wherein the Roman empire decaying, quitted and relinquished what right they had by conquest to this island, and resigned it all into the people's hands, testifies that the people thus reinvested with their own original right, about the year 446, both elected them kings, whom they thought best (the first Christian British kings that ever reigned here since the Romans) and by the same right, when they apprehended cause, usually deposed and put them to death. This is the most fundamental and ancient tenure<sup>113</sup> that any king of England can produce or pretend to, in comparison of which all other titles and pleas are but of yesterday. If any object that Gildas condemns the Britons for so doing the answer is as ready—that he condemns them no more for so doing than he did before for choosing such; for, saith he, "They anointed them kings not of God, but such as were more bloody than the rest." Next, he condemns them not at all for deposing or putting them to death, but for doing it over hastily without trial or well examining the cause, and for electing others worse in their room.

Thus we have here both domestic and most ancient examples that the people of Britain have deposed and put to death their kings in those primitive Christian times. And to couple

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the same, and by equitie." Again Milton had noted this passage in the *Commonplace Book* (C.E. XVIII, 182).

<sup>112</sup> Gildas (516?–570), whom Alcuin called "the wisest of the Britains," wrote his candid history of the bad times in which he lived under the title of *Liber Querulus de Excidio Britanniae*, *The Querulous Book about the Fall of Britain*. Its candid criticism of the Briton led Polydore Vergil to publish it in London in 1525, and made it interesting to Milton as a source for his *History of Britain*. An English translation was published in 1638. A note on the passage to which Milton refers here occurs in the *Commonplace Book*. (C.E. XVIII, 196.)

<sup>113</sup> *tenure*: title or legal right by which property or position of any kind is held. Cf. note 164 below.

reason with example, if the church in all ages, primitive, Romish, or protestant, held it ever no less their duty than the power of their keys,<sup>114</sup> though without express warrant of Scripture, to bring indifferently both king and peasant under the utmost rigor of their canons and censures ecclesiastical, even to the smiting him with a final excommunication,<sup>115</sup> if he persist impenitent; what hinders but that the temporal law both may and ought, though without a special text or precedent, extend with like indifference the civil sword, to the cutting off without exemption him that capitally offends, seeing that justice and religion are from the same God, and works of justice oft-times more acceptable? Yet because that some lately, with the tongues and arguments of malignant backsliders, have written that the proceedings now in parliament against the king are without precedent from any protestant state or kingdom, the examples which follow shall be all protestant, and chiefly presbyterian.

In the year 1546, the Duke of Saxony, Landgrave of Hesse,<sup>116</sup> and the whole protestant league, raised open war against Charles the Fifth,<sup>117</sup> their emperor, sent him a defiance, renounced all faith and allegiance towards him, and debated long in council whether they should give him so much as the title of Cæsar. (Sleidan, L. xvii.) Let all men judge what this wanted of deposing or of killing but the power to do it.

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<sup>114</sup> "The administration of church discipline," said Milton in *Christian Doctrine* I, xxxii, referring to the claims which all churches then more or less based upon the authority to bind or loose in earth and heaven which Christ gave to Peter under the figure of the keys of the kingdom (Matt. xvi, 19), "is called *the power of the keys*."

<sup>115</sup> English Presbyterians sought the power of absolute excommunication for their presbyteries as a means of controlling delinquent members, but found Parliament unwilling to grant it without restrictions. Cf. Introduction #19.

<sup>116</sup> In all, Sleidan is quoted three times in the *Tenure*. (Cf. Introduction #88.) The maneuvers of Maurice, Duke of Saxony, and Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, to which Milton refers, had greater diplomatic than political importance. Cf. notes 202 and 203 below.

<sup>117</sup> Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor, 1519-1555) was defeated by the Smalkald League in which the Protestant princes of Germany combined against him in the war which ended in the treaty of Passau in 1552.

In the year 1559, the Scots protestants claiming promise of their queen-regent for liberty of conscience, she answering that promises were not to be claimed of princes beyond what was commodious for them to grant, told her to her face in the parliament then at Stirling that if it were so, they renounced their obedience; and soon after betook them to arms.<sup>118</sup> (Buchanan *Hist.* L. xvi.) Certainly, when allegiance is renounced, that very hour the king or queen is in effect deposed.

In the year 1564, John Knox,<sup>119</sup> a most famous divine and the reformer of Scotland to the presbyterian discipline, at a general assembly maintained openly in a dispute against Lethington<sup>120</sup> the secretary of state that subjects might and ought execute God's judgments upon their king;<sup>121</sup> that the fact of Jehu and others against their king, having the ground of God's ordinary command to put such and such offenders to death, was not extraordinary, but to be imitated of all that preferred

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<sup>118</sup> Milton found the account of this passage of arms between the nobles and the queen regent, Mary of Lorraine, the widow of James V, in Buchanan's *History of Scotland*, Book xvi.

<sup>119</sup> John Knox (1505-1572) was prominent among reformers in England under Edward VI, and his "Godly Letter" and "Faithful Admonition" were the most famous of the protests of the Marian exiles at Geneva. His later career as the leader of Scottish Presbyterianism and the opponent of Mary, Queen of Scots, is well known.

<sup>120</sup> William Maitland of Lethington (1528?-1573), whom Elizabeth called "the flower of the wits of Scotland" when he was in London negotiating for the Treaty of Berwick in 1560, was always essentially loyal to Mary, to the moderate Protestant cause, and to his country, although to his contemporaries he seemed to be fairly represented by Buchanan's portrait of him in *The Chameleon*. In 1564 he was supporting Mary in her desire to marry Darnley against Knox's interference and insistence that she support the Presbyterian theocracy.

<sup>121</sup> The dramatic debate between Lethington and Knox, point by point as Milton represents it, is recorded in *The Works of John Knox* (Edinburgh, 1646) II, 442-4 and 445-6. Maitland vainly protested against Knox's continual cry in public that "The Quenis Idolatrie, the Quenis Messe, will provoke Godis vengeance." To Lethington's denial that "the peopell, yea, or ane pairt of the peopell may nocht execute Godis jugementis aganis thair King, being ane offender," Knox replied, "I am assureit ye haif no uther warrand except your awin imagination. . . ." And then, in answer to Lethington's challenge, Knox read from the works of Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Musculus, and Calvin, drawing quite as positive anti-monarchist conclusions from them as Milton does from Luther's record in Sleidan's history.

the honor of God to the affection of flesh and wicked princes; that kings, if they offend, have no privilege to be exempted from the punishments of law more than any other subject: so that if the king be a murderer, adulterer, or idolater, he should suffer, not as a king, but as an offender; and this position he repeats again and again before them. Answerable was the opinion of John Craig,<sup>122</sup> another learned divine, and that laws made by the tyranny of princes, or the negligence of people, their posterity might abrogate, and reform all things according to the original institution of commonwealths. And Knox being commanded by the nobility to write to Calvin and other learned men for their judgment in that question, refused, alleging that both himself was fully resolved in conscience and had heard their judgments, and had the same opinion under handwriting of many the most godly and most learned that he knew in Europe; that if he should move the question to them again, what should he do but show his own forgetfulness or inconstancy? All this is far more largely in the *Ecclesiastic history of Scotland*,<sup>123</sup> (l. iv.) with many other passages to this effect all the book over, set out with diligence by Scotchmen of best repute among them at the beginning of these troubles, as if they labored to inform us what we were to do, and what they intended upon the like occasion.

And to let the world know that the whole church and protestant state of Scotland in those purest times of reformation were of the same belief, three years after, they met in the field Mary their lawful and hereditary queen, took her prisoner

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<sup>122</sup> John Craig (1512-1600) is said to have become a Calvinist through reading Calvin's *Institutes* when serving as master of novices in a Dominican monastery in Rome. In 1564 he was Preacher in the Canongate Church in Edinburgh and the strongest of Knox's supporters. Knox records his delivery of the sentiment about laws made by tyranny which Milton mentions, and goes on to say that when he was challenged on the ground that Scotland was a kingdom, and not a commonwealth, he replied, "My lord, my judgment is that evrie kingdom is, or at least should be, ane commonwealth, albeit that evrie commonwealth be nocht ane kingdom." (Knox, *Works*, II, 458.)

<sup>123</sup> *The History of the Reformation in Scotland* (1644) is the work in question. The first four of its five books only are by Knox.

yielding before fight, kept her in prison, and the same year deposed her. (Buchan., *Hist.*, L. xviii.)<sup>124</sup>

And four years after that, the Scots, in justification of their deposing Queen Mary, sent ambassadors to Queen Elizabeth<sup>125</sup> and in a written declaration alleged that they had used towards her more lenity than she deserved; that their ancestors had heretofore punished their kings by death or banishment; that the Scots were a free nation, made king whom they freely chose, and with the same freedom unkinged him if they saw cause, by right of ancient laws and ceremonies yet remaining, and old customs yet among the highlanders in choosing the head of their clans or families; all which, with many other arguments, bore witness, that regal power was nothing else but a mutual covenant or stipulation between king and people. (Buch., *Hist.*, L. xx.) These were Scotchmen and presbyterians: but what measure then have they lately offered to think such liberty less beseeeming us than themselves, presuming to put him upon us for a master, whom their law scarce allows to be their own equal? If now then we hear them in another strain than heretofore in the purest times of their church,<sup>126</sup> we may be confident it is the voice of faction speaking in them, not of

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<sup>124</sup> Buchanan's eighteenth book is severe in its account of Mary's "tyranny" after the murder of her husband, Darnley. It closes with her punishment when she was seized by "the revengers of that publick Parricide," and obliged "to resign up her Government, upon pretense of Sickness, or any other specious allegation." (*History of Scotland* II, 352.)

<sup>125</sup> Lethington and the Regent, James Douglas, Earl of Morton, were among these ambassadors. When their right to punish their sovereign as Mary had been punished was questioned, Morton replied in a long speech (according to Buchanan, p. 423) recalling the "many Kings whom our Forefathers have chastis'd by Imprisonment, Banishment, nay, Death it self." "The Nation of the Scots," he said, "being at first free, by the common Suffrage of the People, set up Kings over them, conditionally, that, if Need were, they might take away the Government by the same Suffrages that gave it: The Footsteps of this Law remain to this very Day; for in the neighbouring Islands . . . the same course is yet observ'd in creating their Magistrates."

<sup>126</sup> Milton takes advantage of the fact that Knox's times were accepted as the "purest" in the history of the Scottish Kirk to put the Presbyterians and especially the Scottish Presbyterians in an inconsistent position in supporting Charles I.



truth and reformation. Which no less in England than in Scotland, by the mouths of those faithful witnesses commonly called puritans and non-conformists, spake as clearly for the putting down, yea, the utmost punishing of kings, as in their several treatises may be read even from the first reign of Elizabeth to these times. Insomuch that one of them, whose name was Gibson,<sup>127</sup> foretold King James he should be rooted out and conclude his race, if he persisted to uphold bishops. And that very inscription, stamped upon the first coins at his coronation, a naked sword in a hand with these words, "*Si mereor, in me,*" "Against me, if I deserve,"<sup>128</sup> not only manifested the judgment of that state, but seemed also to presage the sentence of divine justice in this event upon his son.

In the year 1581, the states of Holland in a general assembly at the Hague abjured all obedience and subjection to Philip king of Spain, and in a declaration justify their so doing, for that by his tyrannous government, against faith so many times given and broken, he had lost his right to all the Belgic provinces—that therefore they deposed him, and declared it lawful to choose another in his stead.<sup>129</sup> (Thuan, l. lxxiv.) From that time to this, no state or kingdom in the world hath equally prospered. But let them remember not to look with an evil and prejudicial eye upon their neighbors, walking by the same rule.

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<sup>127</sup> James Gibson (according to John Mackintosh, *History of Civilization in Scotland*, 1893, II, 188) warned James in 1586 that he might suffer the fate of Jeroboam, who was "rooted out for staying of the true worship of God."

<sup>128</sup> Cf. note 59 above.

<sup>129</sup> The bold declaration of the rights of nations against their princes by the Dutch in 1581 was recorded with sympathy by the great, liberal French historian, Jacques-Auguste de Thou (1553–1617) in his *History of his own Times* (J-A. Thuani *historiarum sui temporis pars prima*, 1604.) In spite of opposition to de Thou's defense in this work of the liberal views which had guided his conduct as an adviser to Henri III and Henri IV, four parts of it were published between 1604 and 1608. Englishmen were particularly interested in de Thou's *A true narration of that horrible conspiracy against King James and the whole parliament of England, commonly called the gunpowder treason*, which was translated in 1674.

But what need these examples to presbyterians, I mean to those who now of late would seem so much to abhor deposing, whenas they to all Christendom have given the latest and the liveliest example of doing it themselves? I question not the lawfulness of raising war against a tyrant in defence of religion or civil liberty, for no protestant church, from the first Waldenses<sup>130</sup> of Lyons and Languedoc to this day, but have done it round<sup>131</sup> and maintained it lawful. But this I doubt not to affirm that the presbyterians, who now so much condemn deposing, were the men themselves that deposed the king, and cannot with all their shifting and relapsing wash off the guiltiness from their own hands. For they themselves by these their late doings have made it guiltiness and turned their own warrantable actions into rebellion.

There is nothing that so actually makes a king of England as rightful possession and supremacy<sup>132</sup> in all causes both civil and ecclesiastical, and nothing that so actually makes a subject of England as those two oaths of allegiance and supremacy observed without equivocating, or any mental reservation. Out of doubt then, when the king shall command things already constituted in church or state, obedience is the true essence of a subject, either to do, if it be lawful, or if he hold the thing unlawful, to submit to that penalty which the law imposes, so long as he intends to remain a subject. Therefore when the people, or any part of them, shall rise against

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<sup>130</sup> The Waldensian movement was founded in Languedoc by Peter Waldo, a merchant of Lyons, in the twelfth century, but its adherents in France and Italy, where it had its strongest hold in the Valle Waldese above Turin, early became associated with the Reformation led by Calvin in Geneva. Waldensian preaching was condemned by the Third Lateran Council in 1179, but the Waldenses "continued to preach on the plea that obedience is due rather to God than to man." (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*.) In the sixteenth century they obtained large political recognition in Italy, which continued until the massacre of 1655, on which Milton wrote the sonnet *On the Late Massacre in Piemont*.

<sup>131</sup> *done it round*: did it roundly, or with a will.

<sup>132</sup> Both oaths were taken by all members before being seated in Parliament. The oath of supremacy, which was first required when Elizabeth came to the throne, was an acknowledgement of the sovereign as the legal head of the English church.

the king and his authority, executing the law in anything established, civil or ecclesiastical, I do not say it is rebellion, if the thing commanded though established be unlawful, and that they sought first all due means of redress (and no man is further bound to law). But I say it is an absolute renouncing both of supremacy and allegiance, which in one word is an actual and total deposing of the king, and the setting up of another supreme authority over them.

And whether the presbyterians have not done all this and much more, they will not put me, I suppose, to reckon up a seven years' story fresh in the memory of all men. Have they not utterly broke the oath of allegiance, rejecting the king's command and authority sent them from any part of the kingdom, whether in things lawful or unlawful? Have they not abjured the oath of supremacy by setting up the parliament without the king,<sup>133</sup> supreme to all their obedience; and though their vow and covenant bound them in general to the parliament, yet sometimes adhering to the lesser part of lords and commons that remained faithful, as they term it, and even of them, one while to the commons without the lords, another while to the lords without the commons?<sup>134</sup> Have they not still<sup>135</sup> declared their meaning, whatever their oath were, to hold them only for supreme whom they found at any time most yielding to what they petitioned? Both these oaths, which were the straitest bond of an English subject in reference to the king, being thus broke and made void, it follows undeniably that the king from that time was by then in fact absolutely deposed; and they no longer in reality to be thought his subjects, notwithstanding their fine clause in the covenant to preserve his person, crown, and dignity,<sup>136</sup> set there by some dodging casuist with more craft than sincerity, to mitigate the matter in case of ill success; and not taken, I suppose, by

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Introduction #65.

<sup>134</sup> Presbyterians had supported the House of Lords on 1 January, 1649, in their unanimous rejection of the ordinance of the Commons which provided for a High Court of Justice to try King Charles.

<sup>135</sup> *still*: everlastingly, continually.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. note 17 above.

any honest man, but as a condition subordinate to every the least particle that might more concern religion, liberty, or the public peace.

To prove it yet more plainly that they are the men who have deposed the king, I thus argue. We know that king and subject are relatives, and relatives<sup>137</sup> have no longer being than in the relation. The relation between king and subject can be no other than regal authority and subjection. Hence I infer, past their defending,<sup>138</sup> that if the subject, who is one relative, take away the relation, of force he takes away also the other relative. But the presbyterians, who were one relative, that is to say, subjects, have for this seven years taken away the relation, that is to say, the king's authority and their subjection to it. Therefore the presbyterians for these seven years have removed and extinguished the other relative, that is to say, the king, or, to speak more in brief, have deposed him—not only by depriving him the execution of his authority, but by conferring it upon others.

If then their oaths of subjection broken, new supremacy obeyed, new oaths and covenants taken, notwithstanding frivolous evasions, have in plain terms unkinged the king much more than hath their seven years' war—not deposed him only, but outlawed him and defied him as an alien, a rebel to law, and enemy to the state—it must needs be clear to any man not averse from reason that hostility and subjection are two direct and positive contraries, and can no more in one subject stand together in respect of the same king than one person at the same time can be in two remote places. Against whom therefore the subject is in act of hostility, we may be confident that to him he is in no subjection; and in whom hostility takes place of subjection, for they can by no means consist together, to him the king can be not only no king, but an enemy.

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<sup>137</sup> *relatives*: (in logic) terms which are definable only through the relation in which they are involved: king and subject, employer and employee, etc.

<sup>138</sup> *past their defending*: beyond their power to defend (a contrary position).

So that from hence we shall not need dispute whether they have deposed him, or what they have defaulted towards him as no king, but show manifestly how much they have done toward the killing him. Have they not levied all these wars against him, whether offensive or defensive (for defence in war equally offends and most prudently beforehand,) and given commission to slay where they knew his person could not be exempt from danger? And if chance or flight had not saved him, how often had they killed him, directing their artillery without blame or prohibition to the very place where they saw him stand? Have they not sequestered<sup>139</sup> him, judged or unjudged, and converted his revenue to other uses, detaining from him as a grand delinquent<sup>140</sup> all means of livelihood, so that for them long since he might have perished, or have starved? Have they not hunted and pursued him round about the kingdom with sword and fire? Have they not formerly denied to treat with him,<sup>141</sup> and their now recanting ministers preached against him as a reprobate incurable, an enemy to God and his church, marked for destruction and therefore not to be treated with? Have they not besieged him, and to their power forbid him water and fire, save what they shot against him to the hazard of his life? Yet while they thus assaulted and endangered it with hostile deeds, they swore in words to defend it, with his crown and dignity; not in order, as it seems now, to a firm and lasting peace, or to his repentance after all this blood; but simply, without regard, without remorse, or any comparable value of all the miseries and calamities suffered by the poor people, or to suffer hereafter, through his obstinacy or impenitence.

No understanding man can be ignorant that covenants are ever made according to the present state of persons and of things, and have ever the more general laws of nature and

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<sup>139</sup> Sequestration, in law, is "the appropriation of the income of a property in order to satisfy claims against the owner." (*N.E.D.*)

<sup>140</sup> Cf. *Way*, note 125.

<sup>141</sup> An allusion to the vote of "No more addresses" by both houses of Parliament on 3 January, 1648, resolving not to permit any further efforts to negotiate with Charles.

of reason included in them, though not expressed. If I make a voluntary covenant as with a man to do him good, and he prove afterward a monster to me, I should conceive a disobligement. If I covenant not to hurt an enemy, in favor of him and forbearance, and hope of his amendment, and he, after that, shall do me tenfold injury and mischief to what he had done when I so covenanted, and still be plotting what may tend to my destruction, I question not but that his after-actions release me; nor know I covenant so sacred that withholds me from demanding justice on him.

Howbeit, had not their distrust in a good cause and the fast and loose of our prevaricating divines overswayed,<sup>142</sup> it had been doubtless better not to have inserted in a covenant unnecessary obligations and words, not works of a supererogating<sup>143</sup> allegiance to their enemy; no way advantageous to themselves had the king prevailed, as to their cost many would have felt; but full of snare and distraction to our friends, useful only, as we now find, to our adversaries, who under such a latitude and shelter of ambiguous interpretation<sup>144</sup> have ever since been plotting and contriving new opportunities to trouble all again. How much better had it been, and more becoming an undaunted virtue, to have declared openly and boldly whom and what power the people were to hold supreme (as on the like occasion protestants have done before, and many conscientious men now in these times have more than once besought the parliament to do) that they might go on upon a sure foundation and not with a riddling covenant in their mouths, seeming to swear counter, almost in the same breath, allegiance and no allegiance; which doubtless had drawn off all the minds of sincere men from siding with them, had they not discerned their actions far more deposing him than their words upholding him; which words, made now

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<sup>142</sup> *overswayed*: prevailed, persuaded in argument.

<sup>143</sup> *supererogating*: superfluous. Theologians define supererogation as "the performance of good works beyond what God commands or requires." (N.E.D.)

<sup>144</sup> Cf. *Way*, note 15, and note 17 above.

the subject of cavillous<sup>145</sup> interpretations, stood ever in the covenant, by judgment of the more discerning sort, an evidence of their fear, not of their fidelity.

What should I return to speak on, of those attempts for which the king himself hath often charged the presbyterians of seeking his life, whenas in the due estimation of things they might without a fallacy be said to have done the deed outright? Who knows not that the king is a name of dignity and office, not of person? Who therefore kills a king, must kill him while he is a king. Then they certainly, who by deposing him have long since taken from him the life of a king, his office and his dignity, they in the truest sense may be said to have killed the king: nor only by their deposing and waging war against him (which besides the danger to his personal life, set him in the farthest opposite point from any vital function of a king) but by their holding him in prison, vanquished and yielded into their absolute and despotic power, which brought him to the lowest degradation and incapacity of the regal name. I say not by whose matchless valor<sup>146</sup> next under God, lest the story of their ingratitude thereupon carry me from the purpose in hand, which is to convince them that they—which I repeat again—were the men who in the truest sense killed the king, not only as is proved before, but by depressing him, their king, far below the rank of a subject to the condition of a captive, without intention to restore him (as the chancellor<sup>147</sup> of Scotland in a speech told him plainly at Newcastle) unless he granted fully all their demands, which they knew he never meant.

Nor did they treat<sup>148</sup> or think of treating, with him, till their hatred to the army that delivered them, not their love or duty to the king, joined them secretly with men sentenced so oft for reprobates in their own mouths, by whose subtle inspiring

<sup>145</sup> *cavillous*: cavilling, hair-splitting.

<sup>146</sup> The reference, of course, is to Cromwell.

<sup>147</sup> John Campbell, Earl of Loudoun, who took a leading part in the National Covenant in 1638, was one of the Scottish commissioners to treat with Charles at Newcastle in 1646. Cf. note 80 above.

<sup>148</sup> *treat*: negotiate, try to make a treaty.

they grew mad<sup>149</sup> upon a most tardy and improper treaty.<sup>150</sup> Whereas if the whole bent of their actions had not been against the king himself, but only against his evil counsellors, as they feigned and published, wherefore did they not restore him all that while to the true life of a king, his office, crown, and dignity, when he was in their power<sup>151</sup> and they themselves his nearest counsellors? The truth, therefore, is both that they would not, and that indeed they could not without their own certain destruction, having reduced him to such a final pass as was the very death and burial of all that in him was regal, and from whence never king of England yet revived but by the new reinforcement of his own party, which was a kind of resurrection to him.

Thus having quite extinguished all that could be in him of a king, and from a total privation clad him over, like another specific<sup>152</sup> thing, with forms and habitudes destructive to the former, they left in his person, dead as to law and all the civil right either of king or subject, the life only of a prisoner, a captive, and a malefactor: whom the equal and impartial hand of justice finding, was no more to spare than another ordinary man: not only made obnoxious to the doom of law by a charge more than once drawn up against him and his own confession to the first article at Newport,<sup>153</sup> but summoned

<sup>149</sup> *grew mad upon*: became madly attached to, doted on.

<sup>150</sup> This was the Engagement secretly signed by Charles and some Scottish commissioners on the Isle of Wight on 26 December, 1647. It led to the Second Civil War, which was ended by Cromwell's victory over the Duke of Hamilton's invading Scots at Preston on 17 August, 1648, and by the swift succeeding destruction of all remnants of Charles's supporters throughout England and Wales.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. note 80 above.

<sup>152</sup> *specific*: in species—i.e., like a thing belonging to another species than kingship.

<sup>153</sup> Divisions between the Presbyterians and Independents in Parliament led to painful negotiations between parliamentary commissioners and Charles at Newport in the Isle of Wight in September–October, 1648. The preamble to the proposition officially tendered to him there began: "Whereas both Houses of the Parliament of England have been necessitated to undertake a war in their just and lawful defence. . . ." Seeing the legal trap laid, Charles agreed to assent to this clause only if all points at issue between him and the Parliament were cleared away by the negotiations—



and arraigned in the sight of God and his people; cursed and devoted to perdition worse than any Ahab,<sup>154</sup> or Antiochus,<sup>155</sup> with exhortation to curse all those in the name of God, that made not war against him, as bitterly as Meroz<sup>156</sup> was to be cursed that went not out against a Canaanitish king, almost in all the sermons, prayers, and fulminations<sup>157</sup> that have been uttered this seven years, by those cloven tongues of falsehood and dissension who now, to the stirring up of new discord, acquit him; and against their own discipline,<sup>158</sup> which they boast to be the throne and sceptre of Christ, absolve him, unconfound him, though unconverted, unrepentant, insensible of all their precious saints and martyrs, whose blood they have so often laid upon his head. And now again, with a new sovereign anointment, can wash it all off, as if it were as vile and no more to be reckoned for than the blood of so many dogs in a time of pestilence: giving the most opprobrious lie to all the acted zeal that for these many years hath filled their bellies and fed them fat upon the foolish people. Ministers of sedition, not of the gospel, who, while they saw it manifestly tend to civil war and bloodshed, never ceased exasperating the people against him; and now that they see it likely to breed new commotion, cease not to incite others against the people that have saved them from him—as if sedition were their only aim, whether against him or for him.

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a condition which he never regarded as having been met. Cf. *Way*, note 32.

<sup>154</sup> See notes 86–7 above.

<sup>155</sup> The Books of Maccabees in the Apocrypha tell the story of the attempt of Antiochus IV, Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.) to suppress Hebrew worship, and of his overthrow by the priest Mattathias and his son, Judas Maccabæus.

<sup>156</sup> Jabin was the Canaanite king overthrown by Barak and the prophetess Deborah, in whose song of triumph occurs the famous curse on the inhabitants of Meroz “because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” (Judg. v, 23.) Cf. Introduction #87.

<sup>157</sup> *fulminations*: “The formal emission of an ecclesiastical condemnation or censure. Subsequently, with more general sense: violent denunciation.” (N.E.D.)

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Introduction #18–9.

But God, as we have cause to trust, will put other thoughts into the people and turn them from giving ear or heed to these mercenary noisemakers of whose fury and false prophecies we have enough experience; and from the murmurs of new discord will incline them to hearken rather with erected minds to the voice of our supreme magistracy, calling us to liberty and the flourishing deeds of a reformed commonwealth; with this hope, that as God was heretofore angry with the Jews who rejected him and his form of government to choose a king,<sup>159</sup> so that he will bless us and be propitious to us who reject a king to make him only our leader and supreme governor, in the conformity, as near as may be, of his own ancient government; if we have at least but so much worth in us to entertain the sense of our future happiness, and the courage to receive what God vouchsafes us—wherein we have the honor to precede other nations, who are now laboring to be our followers.<sup>160</sup>

For as to this question in hand, what the people by their just right may do in change of government or of governor, we see it cleared sufficiently, besides other ample authority even from the mouths of princes themselves. And surely they that shall boast, as we do, to be a free nation, and not have in themselves the power to remove or to abolish any governor supreme, or subordinate, with the government itself upon urgent causes, may please their fancy with a ridiculous and painted freedom, fit to cozen babies;<sup>161</sup> but are indeed under tyranny and servitude, as wanting that power which is the root and source of all liberty, to dispose<sup>162</sup> and economize<sup>163</sup> in the land which God hath given them, as masters of family in their own house and free inheritance. Without which natural and essential power of a free nation, though bearing high their heads, they can in due esteem be thought

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<sup>159</sup> Cf. note 62 above.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. *Way*, note 7.

<sup>161</sup> *cozen*: trick, deceive.

<sup>162</sup> *dispose*: direct, manage.

<sup>163</sup> *economize*: practice domestic administration, either in a house or a country.

no better than slaves and vassals born, in the tenure<sup>164</sup> and occupation of another inheriting lord, whose government, though not illegal or intolerable, hangs over them as a lordly scourge, not as a free government—and therefore to be abrogated.

How much more justly then may they fling off tyranny, or tyrants, who being once deposed can be no more than private men, as subject to the reach of justice and arraignment as any other transgressors? And certainly if men, not to speak of heathen, both wise and religious, have done justice upon tyrants what way they could soonest, how much more mild and humane then is it to give them fair and open trial—to teach lawless kings and all who so much adore them, that not mortal man, or his imperious will, but justice, is the only true sovereign and supreme majesty upon earth? Let men cease therefore out of faction and hypocrisy to make outcries and horrid things of things so just and honorable.

Though perhaps till now no protestant state or kingdom can be alleged to have openly put to death their king, which lately some have written and imputed to their great glory, much mistaking the matter, it is not, neither ought to be, the glory of a protestant state never to have put their king to death; it is the glory of a protestant king never to have deserved death. And if the parliament and military council do what they do without precedent, if it appear their duty, it argues the more wisdom, virtue, and magnanimity, that they know themselves able to be a precedent to others; who perhaps in future ages, if they prove not too degenerate, will look up with honor and aspire towards these exemplary and matchless deeds of their ancestors, as to the highest top of their civil glory and emulation; which heretofore, in the pursuance of fame and foreign dominion, spent itself vaingloriously abroad, but henceforth may learn a better fortitude—to dare execute highest justice on them that shall by force of arms endeavor the oppressing

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<sup>164</sup> *tenure*: the terms on which a feudal vassal occupied his land by virtue of his fealty to an overlord. By the feudal principle, the king is suzerain or overlord of all the land in England. Cf. note 113 above.

and bereaving of religion and their liberty at home: that no unbridled potentate or tyrant, but to his sorrow, for the future may presume such high and irresponsible licence over mankind, to havoc<sup>165</sup> and turn upside down whole kingdoms of men, as though they were no more in respect of his perverse will than a nation of pismires.<sup>166</sup>

As for the party called presbyterian, of whom I believe very many to be good and faithful Christians though misled by some of turbulent spirit, I wish them, earnestly and calmly, not to fall off from their first principles, nor to affect<sup>167</sup> rigor and superiority over men not under them; not to compel unforcible things,<sup>168</sup> in religion especially, which, if not voluntary, becomes a sin;<sup>169</sup> nor to assist the clamor and malicious drifts of men whom they themselves have judged to be the worst of men, the obdurate enemies of God and his church: nor to dart against the actions of their brethren, for want of other argument, those wrested laws and scriptures thrown by prelates and malignants against their own sides, which though they hurt not otherwise, yet taken up by them to the condemnation of their own doings, give scandal to all men and discover<sup>170</sup> in themselves either extreme passion or apostacy. Let them not oppose their best friends and associates, who molest them not at all, infringe not the least of their liberties—unless they call it their liberty to bind other men's consciences—but are still seeking to live at peace with them and brotherly accord. Let them beware an old and perfect enemy,<sup>171</sup> who, though he hope by sowing discord to make them his instruments, yet cannot forbear a minute the open threatening of his destined revenge upon them, when they have served his purposes. Let

<sup>165</sup> *havoc*: wreck, ruin. Cf. *P. L.* X, 616–7.

See with what heat these dogs of hell advance

To waste and havoc yonder world.

<sup>166</sup> *pismires*: ants. Cf. *Way*, note 55.

<sup>167</sup> *affect*: love, or pretend to have.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. *Way*, note 60.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. Introduction #103.

<sup>170</sup> *discover*: uncover, expose.

<sup>171</sup> Charles, who had lost no opportunity to exploit the divisions of those in opposition to him. Cf. note 153 above.

them fear therefore, if they be wise, rather what they have done already than what remains to do;<sup>172</sup> and be warned in time they put no confidence in princes whom they have provoked, lest they be added to the examples of those that miserably have tasted the event.

Stories<sup>173</sup> can inform them how Christiern the Second, king of Denmark<sup>174</sup> not much above a hundred years past, driven out by his subjects and received again upon new oaths and conditions, broke through them all to his most bloody revenge; slaying his chief opposers when he saw his time, both them and their children invited to a feast for that purpose. How Maximilian dealt with those of Bruges, though by mediation of the German princes reconciled to them by solemn and public writings drawn and sealed:<sup>175</sup> how the massacre at Paris<sup>176</sup> was the effect of that credulous peace which the French protestants made with Charles the ninth their king: and that the main visible cause which to this day hath saved the Netherlands from utter ruin, was their final not believing the perfidious cruelty, which, as a constant maxim of state, hath been used by the Spanish kings on their subjects that have taken arms and after trusted them; as no later age but can testify, heretofore in Belgia itself, and this very year in Naples.<sup>177</sup> And to conclude with one past exception though

<sup>172</sup> "Put not your trust in princes." (Psalm clxiii, 3.)

<sup>173</sup> *stories*: histories.

<sup>174</sup> Buchanan's *History* (Book XX, Vol. II, p. 424) mentions Christiern II of Denmark (1481-1559) as having been "for his cruelty . . . forced out of the kingdom, with all his family."

<sup>175</sup> In 1490 Maximilian I (1459-1519), who became Holy Roman Emperor in 1493, took a severe vengeance on Bruges for a revolt against him there in which his own safety had been threatened by the citizens to extort reforms in his government.

<sup>176</sup> In the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day "the lowest estimate of the numbers murdered throughout France is 10,000," says A. F. Pollard (*History of England from the accession of Edward VI to the Death of Elizabeth*, p. 335), among them the admiral, Gaspard de Coligny, the strongest of the Huegenot leaders.

<sup>177</sup> The Spaniards crushed the popular revolution in Naples with great cruelty, in violation of their pledge, in 1648. For the relation of the various revolutionary movements of the century to the English Civil Wars

far more ancient, David,<sup>178</sup> whose sanctified prudence might be alone sufficient not to warrant us only but to instruct us, when once he had taken arms never after that trusted Saul, though with tears and much relenting he twice promised not to hurt him. These instances, few of many, might admonish them, both English and Scotch, not to let their own ends and the driving on of a faction betray them blindly into the snare of those enemies whose revenge looks on them as the men who first begun, fomented, and carried on beyond the cure of any sound or safe accommodation, all the evil which hath since unavoidably befallen them and their king.

I have something also to the divines, though brief to what were needful; not to be disturbers of the civil affairs, being in hands better able and more belonging to manage them; but to study harder and to attend the office of good pastors, knowing that he whose flock is least among them hath a dreadful charge,<sup>179</sup> not performed by mounting twice into the chair<sup>180</sup> with a formal preachment<sup>181</sup> huddled up at the odd hours of a whole lazy week, but by incessant pains and watching, in season and out of season,<sup>182</sup> from house to house, over the souls of whom they have to feed. Which if they ever well considered, how little leisure would they find to be the most pragmatical<sup>183</sup> sidesmen<sup>184</sup> of every popular tumult and sedition? And all this while are to learn what the true end and reason is of the gospel which they teach, and what a world it differs from the censorious and supercilious lording over con-

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see R. B. Merriman, *Six Contemporary Revolutions*, Cambridge, Mass., 1938.

<sup>178</sup> The first promise (in I Sam. xxiv, 22) was made after the incident to which note 85 above refers. The second, after Saul's second attack on David had failed. (I Sam. xxvi, 21.)

<sup>179</sup> *dreadful charge*: solemn obligation.

<sup>180</sup> *chair*: pulpit, preacher's desk.

<sup>181</sup> *preachment*: sermon, formal homily.

<sup>182</sup> An echo of II Tim. iv, 2, and Acts ii, 46.

<sup>183</sup> *pragmatical*: meddlesome. Cf. the insistence that "ministers have least warrant to be pragmatical in matters of state in *Observations on the Articles of Peace*, C.E. VI, 257.

<sup>184</sup> *sidesmen*: partisans, supporters of a faction.

science. It would be good also they lived so as might persuade the people they hated covetousness, which, worse than heresy, is idolatry;<sup>185</sup> hated pluralities,<sup>186</sup> and all kinds of simony;<sup>187</sup> left rambling from benefice to benefice<sup>188</sup> like ravenous wolves seeking where they may devour the biggest. Of which if some, well and warmly seated from the beginning, be not guilty, 'twere good they held not conversation with such as are.<sup>189</sup> Let them be sorry that, being called to assemble about reforming the church, they fell to progging<sup>190</sup> and soliciting the parliament, though they had renounced the name of priests, for a new settling of their tithes<sup>191</sup> and oblations,<sup>192</sup> and double-lined themselves with spiritual places of commodity<sup>193</sup> beyond the possible discharge of their duty. Let them assemble in consistory<sup>194</sup> with their elders and deacons, according to ancient ecclesiastical rule, to the preserving of church discipline each in his several charge, and not a pack of clergymen by themselves to bellycheer<sup>195</sup> in their presumptuous Sion,<sup>196</sup> or to promote designs, abuse and gull the simple laity, and stir up tumult, as the prelates did, for the maintenance of their pride and avarice.

These things if they observe and wait with patience, no doubt but all things will go well without their importunities or exclamations; and the printed letters, which they send

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<sup>185</sup> *Idolatry* was the insult that Puritans laid on Roman Catholic worship, but the idol of whose worship the Presbyterian divines are accused here is mammon. Cf. note 121 above.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, note 218.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. *Way*, note 27.

<sup>188</sup> *benefice*: clerical "living" or appointment to permanent parochial service.

<sup>189</sup> Milton turns the charge of the Presbyterians against the bishops against themselves. Cf. Introduction #21.

<sup>190</sup> *progging*: nagging, "bothering."

<sup>191</sup> Cf. note 26 above.

<sup>192</sup> *oblations*: gifts, special grants of any kind.

<sup>193</sup> *commodity*: profit, financial advantage.

<sup>194</sup> *consistory*: meeting of the elders and minister in the Presbyterian parish churches. Cf. *Church Government*, note 97.

<sup>195</sup> *bellycheer*: feast, guzzle.

<sup>196</sup> Mount Sion in Jerusalem gave its name to Sion College in London, which was the seat of the provincial assembly from 1647 to 1659 and the source of several tracts to which Milton took exception. Cf. note 25 above.

subscribed with the ostentation of great characters and little moment,<sup>197</sup> would be more considerable than now they are. But if they be the ministers of mammon<sup>198</sup> instead of Christ and scandalize his church with the filthy love of gain—aspiring also to sit the closest and the heaviest of all tyrants upon the conscience—and fall notoriously into the same sins whereof so lately and so loud they accused the prelates, as God rooted out those wicked ones immediately before, so will he root out them, their imitators; and, to vindicate his own glory and religion, will uncover their hypocrisy to the open world; and visit upon their own heads that “Curse ye Meroz,” the very motto of their pulpits, wherewith so frequently, not as Meroz<sup>199</sup> but more like atheists, they have blasphemed the vengeance of God and traduced the zeal of his people.

And that they be not what they go for, true ministers of the protestant doctrine, taught by those abroad,<sup>200</sup> famous and religious men who first reformed the church, or by those no less zealous who withstood corruption and the bishops here at home, branded with the name of puritans and nonconformists, we shall abound with testimonies to make appear: that men may yet more fully know the difference between protestant divines, and these pulpit-firebrands.

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<sup>197</sup> *moment*: weight. The style of the Sion College tracts—especially of the *Vindication of the Ministers of the Gospel*—was inflated. Cf. note 23 above.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. *P.L.* I, 678 (and note):

Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell  
From heav’n. . . .

<sup>199</sup> *I.e.*, not like men lukewarm in God’s service. Cf. note 156 above.

<sup>200</sup> *those abroad*: Luther, Calvin, Bucer, Peter Martyr, and others with whom men of the generation of John Knox had associated in Germany and Switzerland in the early days of the Reformation.



Luther.<sup>201</sup>*Lib. contra Rusticos apud Sleidan.*<sup>202</sup> 1. 5.

*Is est hodie rerum status*, &c. "Such is the state of things at this day that men neither can nor will nor indeed ought to endure longer the domination of you Princes."

*Neque vero Cæsarem*, &c. "Neither is Cæsar to make war as head of Christendom, Protector of the Church, Defender of the Faith; these titles being false and windy, and most kings being the greatest enemies to religion." *Lib. de bello contra Turcas apud Sleid.*<sup>203</sup> 1. 14. What hinders then, but that we may depose or punish them?

These also are recited by Cochläus<sup>204</sup> in his *Miscellanies* to be the words of Luther, or some other eminent divine then in Germany, when the Protestants there entered into solemn covenant at Smalcaldia. *Ut ora iis obturem* &c. "That I may stop their mouths, the Pope and Emperor are not born but

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<sup>201</sup> Martin Luther (1483-1546), the founder of the German Reformation, which is usually dated from his nailing of his famous theses to the door of the cathedral in Wittenburg in 1517. For the significance of the passages cited here see the Introduction #88.

<sup>202</sup> Johannes Philippus Sleidanus (1506-1556) wrote the history of the Smalkald League (see note 116 above) and served as deputy for Strassbourg to the Council of Trent. (See *Areopagitica*, note 72.) His work, originally in Latin, was translated into English by John Daus in 1560.

<sup>203</sup> In Sleidan's fourteenth book, "On the War against the Turks," he explains Luther's embarrassment because in the emergency of a serious Turkish invasion of Hungary in 1542 his support of the Emperor Charles V in organizing resistance was contrasted by opponents of the Lutherans with his earlier opposition to crusades led by the Emperor. Luther had written a "booke in the vulgare tongue, as exhortation to the warre, whiche he dedicated to Philip the Lantgrave." In it, Sleidan says, he frankly acknowledged that "in his yong days" he had condemned the financial abuse of unnecessary crusades, and had pled "that the Emperour is not to be excited unto warre as the head of Christendome, Protectour of the church, and defendour of the faith: For the tytles are false and wayne glorious and iniurious to Christe, who allone can defende his church." (Daus's translation, London, 1560, Fclxxxixr.)

<sup>204</sup> Johannes Dobeneck (1480?-1552), Cochläus, a German theologian, of whom Mr. Allison reports the legend that he proposed a debate with Luther of which the burning of the defeated contestant alive should be the victor's reward. There seems to be no trace of his *Miscellanies* in this country.

elected, and may also be deposed as hath been often done." If Luther, or whoever else thought so, he could not stay there, for the right of birth or succession can be no privilege in nature to let a tyrant sit irremovable over a nation free born, without transforming that nation from the nature and condition of men born free into natural, hereditary, and successive slaves. Therefore he saith further: "To displace and throw down this exactor, this Phalaris,<sup>205</sup> this Nero, is a work well pleasing to God." Namely, for being such a one, which is a moral reason. Shall then so slight a consideration as his hap to be not elective simply but by birth, which was a mere accident, overthrow that which is moral, and make unpleasing to God that which otherwise had so well pleased him? Certainly not, for if the matter be rightly argued, election much rather than chance binds a man to content himself with what he suffers by his own bad election. Though indeed neither the one nor other binds any man, much less any people, to a necessary sufferance of those wrongs and evils which they have ability and strength enough given them to remove.

Zwinglius.<sup>206</sup> tom. i. articul. 42.

*Quando vero perfidè*, &c. "When kings reign perfidiously and against the rule of Christ, they may according to the word of God be deposed."

*Mihi ergo compertum non est*, &c. "I know not how it comes to pass that kings reign by succession, unless it be with consent of the whole people." *ibid.*

*Quum vero consensu*, &c. "But when by suffrage and consent of the whole people, or the better part of them, a tyrant is deposed or put to death, God is the chief leader in that action." *ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum (565-549 B.C.) is said to have destroyed his enemies by putting them into a bull of brass and slowly roasting them alive. The *Letters of Phalaris*, which Bentley proved spurious, imply a very intelligent despot as their author. Cf. *Of Education*, note 74.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Introduction #59 and *Areopagitica*, note 249. Mr. Allison refers Milton's quotations to Zwinglius, *Opera* (edited by Schuler and Schulthess) I, 42, 380.

*Nunc cum tam tepidi sumus, &c.* "Now that we are so lukewarm in upholding public justice, we endure the vices of tyrants to reign nowadays with impunity; justly therefore by them we are trod underfoot, and shall at length with them be punished. Yet ways are not wanting by which tyrants may be removed, but there wants public justice." *ibid.*

*Cavete vobis ô tyranni.* "Beware ye tyrants for now the Gospel of Jesus Christ spreading far and wide will renew the lives of many to love innocence and justice; which if ye also shall do, ye shall be honored. But if ye shall go on to rage and do violence, ye shall be trampled on by all men." *ibid.*

*Romanum imperium imò quodq; &c.*<sup>207</sup> "When the Roman Empire or any other shall begin to oppress religion, and we negligently suffer it, we are as much guilty of religion so violated as the oppressors themselves." *Idem Epist. ad Conrad, Somium.*

### Calvin on Daniel, c. 4, v. 25.<sup>208</sup>

*Hodie Monarchae semper in suis titulis, &c.* "Nowadays monarchs pretend always in their titles to be kings by the grace of God; but how many of them to this end only pretend it, that they may reign without control? For to what purpose is the grace of God mentioned in the title of kings but that they may acknowledge no superior? In the meanwhile God whose name they use to support themselves, they willingly would tread under their feet. It is therefore a mere cheat when they boast to reign by the grace of God."

*Abdicant se terreni principes, &c.* "Earthly princes depose themselves while they rise against God, yea they are unworthy to be numbered among men; rather it behooves us to spit upon their heads than to obey them." *On Daniel, c. 6, v. 22.*

<sup>207</sup> The reference is *Opera* VIII, 493.

<sup>208</sup> The work quoted is Calvin's *Commentary on Daniel, Praelectiones in Librum Prophetiarum Danielis*. Cf. note 121 above. Calvin's English and Scottish interpreters regularly represented him as a much less passive resister of "tyrants" than he was.

Bucer on Matthew,<sup>209</sup> c. 5.

*Si princeps superior, &c.* "If a sovereign prince endeavor by arms to defend transgressors, to subvert those things which are taught in the word of God, they who are in authority under him ought first to dissuade him; if they prevail not, and that he now bears himself not as a prince but as an enemy, and seeks to violate privileges and rights granted to inferior magistrates or commonalties, it is the part of pious magistrates, imploring first the assistance of God, rather to try all ways and means than to betray the flock of Christ, to such an enemy of God. For they also are to this end ordained, that they may defend the people of God, and maintain those things which are good and just. For to have supreme power lessens not the evil committed by that power, but makes it the less tolerable, by how much the more generally hurtful." Then certainly the less tolerable, the more unpardonably to be punished.

Of Peter Martyr we have spoke before.

Paræus<sup>210</sup> in Rom[ans], 13.

*Quorum est constituere Magistratus, &c.* "They whose part it is to set up magistrates may restrain them also from outrageous deeds, or pull them down; but all magistrates are set up either by parliament, or by electors, or by other magistrates. They therefore who exalted them may lawfully degrade and punish them."

Of the Scotch divines I need not mention others than the famousest among them, Knox, and his fellow laborers in the reformation of Scotland, whose large treatises on this subject defend the same opinion. To cite them sufficiently were to insert their whole books, written purposely on this argument. Knox's "Appeal" and "To the Reader,"<sup>211</sup> where he promises

<sup>209</sup> For the Strassbourg reformer, Martin Bucer (1491-1551), see the Introduction #41.

<sup>210</sup> For the German reformer, David Paræus (1548-1622), see the Introduction #18 and *Church Government*, notes 131-2.

<sup>211</sup> Mr. Allison points out that *The Appellation of John Knoxe from the cruell and most unjust sentence pronounced against him by the false*

in a postscript that the book which he intended to set forth, called *The Second Blast of the Trumpet*, should maintain more at large that the same men most justly may depose and punish him whom unadvisedly they have elected, notwithstanding birth, succession, or any oath of allegiance. Among our own divines, Cartwright<sup>212</sup> and Fenner,<sup>213</sup> two of the learnedest, may in reason satisfy us what was held by the rest. Fenner in his *Book of Theology*, maintaining, that "they who have power, that is to say a parliament, may either by fair means or by force depose a tyrant," whom he defines to be him that wilfully breaks all, or the principai, conditions made between him and the commonwealth. *Fen. Sac. Theolog.* c. 13, and Cartwright in a prefixed "Epistle" testifies his approbation of the whole book.

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*bishoppes and clergy of Scotland, with his supplication and exhortation to the nobilitie, and comunaltie of the same realme* was published at Geneva in 1558, bound together with Anthony Gilby's *An Admonition to England and Scotland, to call them to Repentance*. The same volume contained *John Knoxe to the Reader*, which sketched an intended continuation of the treatise against Mary Stuart and Elizabeth familiar in R. L. Stevenson's essay. The full title of that most famous tract of Knox is, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1552). Cf. notes 119-21 above.

<sup>212</sup> Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603), as Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, became the center of the Puritan agitation which culminated in the first great statement of the demands for reform in the English church, the *Admonition to Parliament* in 1572. He was in exile from 1573 until 1585, and in 1590 he was committed to prison by Archbishop Whitgift, mainly for his opposition to the claim of the divine right of the bishops. He was not, however, in sympathy with the Marprelate group, and particularly in his later years, he had the respect of both parties in the church.

<sup>213</sup> Dudley Fenner (1558?-1587) paid for his support of Cartwright as an undergraduate at Cambridge by being "plucked" in 1575, or denied a degree. He followed Cartwright to exile in Antwerp, where he was ordained. In 1583 he was given a living in Kent and soon became the leader of seventeen Kentish clergy who protested in *Sentences and Principles of Puritans in Kent* against the act of supremacy. (Cf. note 132 above.) The Latin title of the work to which Milton refers is *Sacra Theologia sive Veritas quae est secundum pietatem ad unice et verae methodi leges descripta, et in decem libros per Dudleium Fennerum digesta* (London, 1585).

Gilby<sup>214</sup> *de obedientia*, p. 25 & 105.

"Kings have their authority of the people, who may upon occasion reassume it to themselves."

*England's Complaint against the Canons.*

"The people may kill wicked princes as monsters and cruel beasts."

Christopher Goodman,<sup>215</sup> *Of Obedience.*

"When kings or rulers become blasphemers of God, oppressors and murderers of their subjects, they ought no more to be accounted kings or lawful magistrates, but as private men to be examined, accused, condemned, and punished by the law of God, and being convicted and punished by that law, it is not man's but God's doing." (C. 10, p. 139.)

"By the civil laws a fool or idiot born, and so proved, shall lose the lands and inheritance whereto he is born, because he is not able to use them aright. And especially ought in no case be suffered to have the government of a whole nation; but there is no such evil can come to the commonwealth by fools and idiots as doth by the rage and fury of ungodly rulers; such therefore being without God ought to have no authority over God's people, who by his word requireth the contrary." (C. 11, p. 143, 144.)

<sup>214</sup> Anthony Gilby (1510?-1585) was associated with Knox in Geneva, and was a voluminous and "acrimonious" controversialist. There seems to be no trace of his work "On Obedience" in this country, nor of *England's Complaint against the Canons*. Cf. note 211 above.

<sup>215</sup> The reaction of 1553-8 drove Christopher Goodman (1520-1603) from his chair of divinity at Oxford into exile in Geneva, where he became a close friend of Knox. In 1558 he issued the book to which Milton refers, *How Superior Powers ought to be Obeyd of their subjects: and Wherein they may lawfully by Gods Worde be disobeyed and resisted. Wherein also is declared the cause of all this present miserie in England, and the onely way to remedy the same*. Milton's references to this tract can be checked and their contexts controlled in the Facsimile Text Society's reprint of 1931. Milton's page references are correct, but he sometimes quotes separate sentences as if they were continuous.

"No person is exempt by any law of God from this punishment, be he king, queen, or emperor, he must die the death, for God hath not placed them above others, to transgress his laws as they list, but to be subject to them as well as others, and if they be subject to his laws, then to the punishment also, so much the more as their example is more dangerous." (C. 13, p. 184.)

"When magistrates cease to do their duty, the people are as it were without magistrates; yea worse, and then God giveth the sword into the people's hand, and he himself is become immediately their head." p. 185.

"If princes do right and keep promise with you, then do you owe to them all humble obedience. If not, ye are discharged and your study ought to be in this case how ye may depose and punish according to the law such rebels against God and oppressors of their country." (p. 190.)

This Goodman was a minister of the English church at Geneva, as Dudley Fenner was at Middleburgh, or some other place in that country. These were the pastors of those saints and confessors who, flying from the bloody persecution of Queen Mary, gathered up at length their scattered members into many congregations. Whereof some in upper, some in lower Germany, part of them settled at Geneva, where this author having preached on this subject to the great liking of certain learned and godly men who heard him, was by them sundry times and with much instance required to write more fully on that point. Who thereupon took it in hand, and conferring with the best learned in those parts (among whom Calvin was then living in the same city), with their special approbation he published this treatise, aiming principally, as is testified by Whittingham in the Preface, that his brethren of England, the protestants, might be persuaded in the truth of that doctrine concerning obedience to magistrates. (Whittingham<sup>216</sup> in Prefat.)

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<sup>216</sup> William Whittingham (1524-1579) fled from Oxford in 1553 and later joined Knox in Geneva, succeeding him in 1559 as minister there. For the substance of his Preface see the Introduction #49.

These were the true protestant divines of England, our fathers in the faith we hold. This was their sense, who for so many years laboring under prelacy, through all storms and persecutions, kept religion from extinguishing; and delivered it pure to us, till there arose a covetous and ambitious generation of divines, (for divines they call themselves) who, feigning on a sudden to be new converts and proselytes from episcopacy, under which they had long temporised, opened their mouths at length, in show against pluralities and prelacy, but with intent to swallow them down both; gorging themselves like harpies on those simonious<sup>217</sup> places and preferments<sup>218</sup> of their outed predecessors, as the quarry for which they hunted, not to plurality<sup>219</sup> only but to multiplicity; for possessing which they had accused them, their brethren, and aspiring under another title to the same authority and usurpation over the consciences of all men.

Of this faction, divers reverend and learned divines (as they are styled in the phylactery<sup>220</sup> of their own title-page) pleading the lawfulness of defensive arms against this king in a treatise called *Scripture and Reason*,<sup>221</sup> seem in words to disclaim utterly the deposing of a king. But both the scripture and

<sup>217</sup> Cf. note 187 above.

<sup>218</sup> *preferments*: appointments to livings in the church.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, note 218.

<sup>220</sup> *phylactery*: a verse of scripture worn on the brow by some of the Jews of Christ's time. The Pharisees who made "broad their phylacteries" are rebuked in Matthew xxiii, 5. Cf. the sonnet *On the New Forcers of Conscience*, 17.

<sup>221</sup> The book in question is "*Scripture and Reason pleaded for Defensive Armes: or, the whole Controversie about Subjects taking up Armes. Wherein besides other Pamphlets, an Answer is punctually directed to Dr. Fernes Booke, entitled, Resolving of Conscience, etc. Published by divers Reverend and Learned Divines.*" The title page indicates that the book's printing was ordered by the Committee of the House of Commons concerning Printing on 14 April, 1643. Dr. Ferne, the author of *Resolving of Conscience Upon this Question*: "Whether upon a Supposition or a Case, as is now usually made (The King will not discharge his trust but is bent or seduced to subvert Religion, Laws, and Liberties) Subjects may take Arms and resist? and whether that case be now?" (1642), had urged the doctrine of absolute obedience to kings with an ingenuity and relentless appeal to the fear of damnation which must have done serious harm to the recruiting of the parliamentary armies.



the reasons which they use draw consequences after them, which, without their bidding, conclude it lawful.<sup>222</sup> For if by scripture, and by that especially to the Romans<sup>223</sup> which they most insist upon, kings, doing that which is contrary to St. Paul's definition of a magistrate, may be resisted, they may altogether with as much force of consequence be deposed or punished. And if by reason the unjust authority of kings "may be forfeited in part, and his power be reassumed in part, either by the parliament or people, for the case in hazard and the present necessity" (as they affirm, p. 34), there can no scripture be alleged, no imaginable reason given that necessity continuing—as it may always, and they in all prudence and their duty may take upon them to foresee it—why in such a case they may not finally amerce<sup>224</sup> him with the loss of his kingdom, of whose amendment they have no hope. And if one wicked action persisted in against religion, laws, and liberties, may warrant us to thus much in part, why may not forty times as many tyrannies by him committed, warrant us to proceed on restraining him till the restraint become total? For the ways of justice are exactest proportion. If for one trespass of a king it require so much remedy or satisfaction, then for twenty more as heinous crimes, it requires of him twenty-fold, and so proportionably, till it come to what is utmost among men. If in these proceedings against their king they may not finish, by the usual course of justice, what they have begun, they could not lawfully begin at all. For this golden rule of justice and morality, as well as of arithmetic,<sup>225</sup> out of three terms which they admit, will as certainly and unavoidably

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<sup>222</sup> *Scripture and Reason* carried the plea of loyalty to the king as consistent with resistance to him to a great extreme. Cf. Introduction #85-7.

<sup>223</sup> Romans xiii, 1-2. Cf. Introduction #89.

<sup>224</sup> *amerce*: punish, condemn to any forfeit approved by the conscience of the judge.

<sup>225</sup> Mr. Allison cites Barnard Smith's *Arithmetic*: "Almost all questions which arise in the common concerns of life, so far as they require calculation by numbers, might be brought within the scope of the Rule of Three, which enables us to find the fourth term in a proportion, and which on account of its great use and extensive application is often called the Golden Rule."

bring out the fourth as any problem that ever Euclid<sup>226</sup> or Appollonius<sup>227</sup> made good by demonstration.

And if the parliament, being undeposable but by themselves (as is affirmed, p. 37, 38), might for his whole life, if they saw cause, take all power, authority, and the sword out of his hand, which in effect is to unmagistrate him, why might they not—being then themselves the sole magistrates in force—proceed to punish him, who, being lawfully deprived of all things that define a magistrate, can be now no magistrate to be degraded lower, but an offender to be punished. Lastly, whom they may defy and meet in battle, why may they not as well prosecute by justice? For lawful war is but the execution of justice against them who refuse law. Among whom if it be lawful (as they deny not, p. 19, 20), to slay the king himself coming in front at his own peril, wherefore may not justice do that intendedly, which the chance of a defensive war might without blame have done casually, nay, purposely, if there it find him among the rest? They ask (p. 19), “By what rule of conscience or God a state is bound to sacrifice religion, laws, and liberties, rather than a prince, defending such as subvert them, should come in hazard of his life.” And I ask by what conscience, or divinity, or law, or reason, a state is bound to leave all these sacred concernments under a perpetual hazard and extremity of danger rather than cut off a wicked prince, who sits plotting day and night to subvert them.

They tell us that the law of nature<sup>228</sup> justifies any man to defend himself, even against the king in person. Let them show us then why the same law may not justify much more a state or whole people, to do justice upon him against whom each private man may lawfully defend himself; seeing all kind of justice done is a defence to good men, as well as a punishment to bad, and justice done upon a tyrant is no more but the

<sup>226</sup> The work by which the modern world best knows the “school of Alexandria” (cf. *Of Education*, note 94) is the *Elements of Geometry* of Euclid (328–283 B.C.).

<sup>227</sup> Apollonius of Perga in Pamphylia, whose work on conic sections is still extant, lived in the second century B.C.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. note 32 above.

necessary self-defence of a whole commonwealth. To war upon a king that his instruments may be brought to condign punishment, and thereafter to punish them the instruments, and not to spare only, but to defend and honor him the author, is the strangest piece of justice to be called Christian, and the strangest piece of reason to be called human, that by men of reverence and learning, as their style imports them, ever yet was vented. They maintain in the third and fourth section that a judge or inferior magistrate is anointed of God, is his minister, hath the sword in his hand, is to be obeyed by St. Peter's rule,<sup>229</sup> as well as the supreme, and without difference anywhere expressed: and yet will have us fight against the supreme till he remove and punish the inferior magistrate (for such were greatest delinquents); whenas by scripture and by reason there can no more authority be shown to resist the one than the other; and altogether as much, to punish or depose the supreme himself, as to make war upon him, till he punish or deliver up his inferior magistrates, whom in the same terms we are commanded to obey and not to resist.

Thus while they, in a cautious line or two here and there stuffed in, are only verbal against the pulling down or punishing of tyrants, all the scripture and the reason which they bring, is in every leaf direct and rational to infer it altogether as lawful as to resist them. And yet in all their sermons, as hath by others been well noted, they went much further. For divines, if ye observe them, have their postures and their motions,<sup>230</sup> no less expertly and with no less variety than they that practise feats in the Artillery-ground.<sup>231</sup> Sometimes they seem furiously to march on, and presently march counter.

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<sup>229</sup> I Peter ii, 13-4. Cf. note 65 above.

<sup>230</sup> *motions*: evolutions of drilling troops. Piety and military efficiency had been combined in 1642 in Captain Lazarus Howard's *Military and Spiritual Motions for Foot Companies*. "With an Abridgement of the Exercize of a single Company, as they now ought to be taught, and no otherwise." By a labored acrostic arrangement, the manual of arms was crisscrossed with theological maxims.

<sup>231</sup> The Artillery-ground was near Finsbury Fields, and had long been the training ground of the London train-bands.

By and by they stand, and then retreat; or if need be, can face about, or wheel in a whole body with that cunning and dexterity as is almost unperceivable, to wind themselves by shifting ground into places of more advantage. And providence only must be the drum, providence the word of command that calls them from above, but always to some larger benefice, or acts them into such or such figures and promotions. At their turns and doublings no men readier, to the right, or to the left; for it is their turns which they serve chiefly; herein only singular that with them there is no certain hand right or left, but as their own commodity<sup>232</sup> thinks best to call it. But if there come a truth to be defended, which to them and their interest of this world seems not so profitable, straight these nimble motionists can find no even legs to stand upon, and are no more of use to reformation thoroughly performed and not superficially, or to the advancement of truth (which among mortal men is always in her progress), than if on a sudden they were struck maim and crippled. Which the better to conceal, or the more to countenance by a general conformity to their own limping, they would have scripture, they would have reason also made to halt with them for company; and would put us off with impotent conclusions, lame and shorter than the premises.

In this posture they seem to stand with great zeal and confidence on the wall of Sion, but like Jebusites, not like Israelites, or Levites. Blind also as well as lame, they discern not David from Adonibezek,<sup>233</sup> but cry him up for the Lord's anointed whose thumbs and great toes not long before they had cut off upon their pulpit cushions. Therefore he who is our only King, the Root of David, and whose kingdom is eternal right-

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<sup>232</sup> *commodity*: advantage, profit.

<sup>233</sup> When the Israelites first invaded Palestine "they found Adonibezek [*i. e.*, the king of Bezek] in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adonibezek fled: and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes." (Judg. i, 5-6.) Regarding Adonibezek as a type of Charles I, Milton jeers at the Presbyterians who, after capturing him and taking him into their Zion (See note 196 above), are now ready to see in him David, the true king of the Jews.

eousness, with all those that war under him, whose happiness and final hopes are laid up in that only just and rightful kingdom (which we pray incessantly may come soon, and in so praying wish hasty ruin and destruction to all tyrants)<sup>234</sup>—even he our immortal King, and all that love him, must of necessity have in abomination these blind and lame defenders of Jerusalem; as the soul of David hated them and forbid them entrance into God's house and his own.<sup>235</sup> But as to those before them, which I cited first (and with an easy search, for many more might be added), as they there stand, without more in number, being the best and chief of protestant divines, we may follow them for faithful guides and without doubting may receive them as witnesses abundant of what we here affirm concerning tyrants. And indeed I find it generally the clear and positive determination of them all (not prelatiical, or of this late faction subprelatiical) who have written on this argument: that to do justice on a lawless king is to a private man unlawful, to an inferior magistrate lawful:<sup>236</sup> or if they were divided in opinion, yet greater than these here alleged, or of more authority in the church, there can be none produced.

If any one shall go about by bringing other testimonies to disable these,<sup>237</sup> or by bringing these against themselves in other cited passages of their books, he will not only fail to make good that false and impudent assertion of those mutinous ministers—that the deposing and punishing of a king or tyrant “is against the constant judgment of all protestant divines” (it being quite the contrary), but will prove rather what perhaps he intended not, that the judgment of divines, if it be so various and inconstant to itself, is not considerable or to be esteemed at all. Ere which be yielded, as I hope it never will, these ignorant assertors in their own art will have proved them-

<sup>234</sup> Cf. Introduction #109 and *Way*, note 144.

<sup>235</sup> “And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be the chief and the captain.” (II Sam. v, 8.)

<sup>236</sup> Cf. Introduction #88.

<sup>237</sup> *these*: the Protestant authorities—Knox, Goodman, Luther, and others who have been quoted.

selves more and more, not to be protestant divines (whose constant judgment in this point they have so audaciously belied) but rather to be a pack of hungry church-wolves, who in the steps of Simon Magus<sup>238</sup> their father, following the hot scent of double livings and pluralities, advowsons,<sup>239</sup> donatives,<sup>240</sup> inductions,<sup>241</sup> and augmentations<sup>242</sup> (though uncalled to the flock of Christ but by the mere suggestion of their bellies, like those priests of Bel whose pranks Daniel found out),<sup>243</sup> have got possession, or rather seized upon the pulpit, as the stronghold and fortress of their sedition and rebellion against the civil magistrate. Whose friendly and victorious hand having rescued them from the bishops, their insulting lords, fed them plenteously, both in public and in private, raised them to be high and rich of poor and base; only suffered not their covetousness and fierce ambition (which as the pit that sent out their fellow-locusts hath been ever bottomless and boundless)<sup>244</sup> to interpose in all things and over all persons, their impetuous ignorance and importunity.

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<sup>238</sup> Cf. *Way*, note 27.

<sup>239</sup> *advowson*: the right of presentation to an ecclesiastical living of any kind.

<sup>240</sup> *donative*: a living or appointment which the founder or his heirs may grant free of interference by the ordinary bishop.

<sup>241</sup> *induction*: formal establishment of a Presbyterian clergyman in his church.

<sup>242</sup> *augmentation*: an increase in a clergyman's stipend, sometimes obtained by legal action against the parish authorities.

<sup>243</sup> According to the story told in the Apocryphal Book of Bel, 18-22, Daniel found a secret passage into the great idol of the god Bel, through which the priests' families got possession of the offerings made to him in his great temple in Babylon.

<sup>244</sup> Milton's final compliment to the Presbyterian divines is to liken them to the locusts which St. John describes as coming out of the bottomless pit of hell in the last days, when "men shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." (Rev. ix, 1-6.)

THE SECOND  
DEFENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,  
AGAINST AN ANONYMOUS LIBEL,

ENTITLED

"THE ROYAL BLOOD CRYING TO HEAVEN FOR VENGEANCE  
ON THE ENGLISH PARRICIDES."  
TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN, BY ROBERT FELLOWES.

(*Selections*)<sup>1</sup>

. . . Shall I mention those wise and ancient bards whose misfortunes the gods are said to have compensated by superior endowments, and whom men so much revered that they chose rather to impute their want of sight to the injustice of heaven than to their own want of innocence or virtue? What is reported of the augur Tiresias<sup>2</sup> is well known. Of Phineus Apollonius<sup>3</sup> sang in his *Argonauts*:

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<sup>1</sup>The selection begins at the point where Milton, in replying to the charge of *The Cry of the King's Blood* (*Regii sanguinis clamor*) that his blindness was disgracefully contracted and had disfigured him, indicates the psychological process by which he recovered his courage and self-confidence after losing his sight. Incidentally, the selection is an illuminating commentary on *P.L.* III, 26-36.

The *Cry* was published in 1652. Alexander Morus, the half-Scotch, half-French professor of theology at Leyden whose denials could not convince Milton that he was not its author, is best known, though perhaps not fairly represented by, Milton's scandalous observations on his career in the *Second Defence* and the *Defence of Himself*.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. the similar references to Tiresias in *P.L.* III, 36, and *On the Platonic Idea*, 25-6. The quotation from the *Argonautica* here is followed by Apollonius' account of the blindness of Phineus as a vengeance of Zeus, who resented the prophet's unerring command of the gift of prophecy.

<sup>3</sup>Apollonius began and ended his career as a member of the staff of poets attached to the library in Alexandria in the middle of the third century B.C. (cf. *Of Education*, note 94), but spent the better part of his productive years at the school of Rhodes. His "Homeric" epic, the *Argo-*

To men he dar'd the will divine disclose,  
 Nor fear'd what Jove might in his wrath impose.  
 The gods assigned him age, without decay,  
 But snatched the blessing of his sight away.

But God himself is truth; in propagating which, as men display a greater integrity and zeal, they approach nearer to the similitude of God, and possess a greater portion of his love. We cannot suppose the deity envious of truth, or unwilling that it should be freely communicated to mankind. The loss of sight, therefore, which this inspired sage, who was so eager in promoting knowledge among men, sustained, cannot be considered as a judicial punishment. Or shall I mention those worthies who were as distinguished for wisdom in the cabinet, as for valor in the field? And first, Timoleon<sup>4</sup> of Corinth, who delivered his city and all Sicily from the yoke of slavery; than whom there never lived in any age, a more virtuous man, or a more incorrupt statesman: Next Appius Claudius,<sup>5</sup> whose discreet counsels in the senate though they could not restore sight to his own eyes, saved Italy from the formidable inroads of Pyrrhus:<sup>6</sup> then Cæcilius Metellus<sup>7</sup> the high-priest, who lost his sight, while he saved, not only the city, but the palladium, the protection of the city, and the most sacred relics, from the destruction of the flames. On other occasions Providence has indeed given conspicuous proofs of its regard for such singular exertions of patriotism and virtue; what, therefore, happened to so great and so good a man, I can hardly place in the cata-

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*nautica*, tells the story of the expedition of the Argonauts to Colchis to secure the golden fleece, and its central episode is the love story of Jason and Medea. The lines quoted are from Book II, 181-4.

<sup>4</sup> Most of Milton's readers were familiar with the account of the blindness of Timoleon in Plutarch's *Life* (chapter xxxvii) where he is described as losing his sight in old age, though he had indulged no vice which might cause such an affliction. The citizens of Corinth vied for the opportunity of seeing him and honoring him in his affliction.

<sup>5</sup> Again Plutarch—this time in the *Life of Pyrrhus*, chapter xviii—is the source.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Areopagitica*, note 264.

<sup>7</sup> Lucius Cæcilius Metellus was consul in 251 B.C. and a general in the first Punic War. The palladium which he is supposed to have saved, was the same that Æneas preserved from the flames that destroyed Troy.



logue of misfortunes. Why should I mention others of later times, as Dandolo<sup>8</sup> of Venice, the incomparable Doge; or Boemar Zisca,<sup>9</sup> the bravest of generals, and the champion of the cross; or Jerome Zanchius;<sup>10</sup> and some other theologians of the highest reputation? For it is evident that the patriarch Isaac,<sup>11</sup> than whom no man ever enjoyed more of the divine regard, lived blind for many years; and perhaps also his son Jacob,<sup>12</sup> who was equally an object of the divine benevolence. And in short, did not our Saviour<sup>13</sup> himself clearly declare that that poor man whom he restored to sight had not been born blind, either on account of his own sins or those of his progenitors?

And with respect to myself, though I have accurately examined my conduct, and scrutinized my soul, I call thee, O God, the searcher of hearts, to witness, that I am not conscious, either in the more early or in the later periods of my life, of having committed any enormity, which might deservedly have marked me out as a fit object for such a calamitous visitation.

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<sup>8</sup> Enrico Dandolo (1120-1205) is said to have been disfigured and partially blinded by a wound suffered in youth in Constantinople. Elected Doge of Venice at seventy-three, he led an army which conquered Dalmatia and sacked Constantinople, carrying back the famous bronze horses of St. Mark.

<sup>9</sup> Boemar Zisca (1376?-1424) lost an eye in the civil wars of Wenceslaus IV, king of Bohemia. In 1421 at the siege of the castle of Ralib, he lost the second eye, but afterward twice severely defeated Sigismund, king of the Germans, and took an active part in the civil wars centering around Prague in 1422-3. His interest in John Huss perhaps attracted Milton's attention.

<sup>10</sup> Jerome Zanchius (1516-1590) was born in Brescia and entered a German monastery at sixteen. Going to Italy for study, he was converted there by reading Bullinger and Calvin, and in 1551 went to Strassbourg to hold the first of the university chairs which he successively occupied in various German cities for the rest of his life. In the *Christian Doctrine* Milton quotes from several of his theological works.

<sup>11</sup> When Isaac was old "his eyes were dim." (Gen. xxvii, 1.)

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps Milton had the scene of Jacob's death in mind. He is told of the coming of his son Joseph as if he could not recognize him for himself. (Gen. lxxviii, 2.)

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus saw a blind man, "his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." (John ix, 2-3.)

But since my enemies boast that this affliction is only a retribution for the transgressions of my pen, I again invoke the Almighty to witness, that I never, at any time, wrote anything which I did not think agreeable to truth, to justice, and to piety. This was my persuasion then, and I feel the same persuasion now. Nor was I ever prompted to such exertions by the influence of ambition, by the lust of lucre or of praise; it was only by the conviction of duty and the feeling of patriotism, a disinterested passion for the extension of civil and religious liberty. Thus, therefore, when I was publicly solicited to write a reply to the Defence of the royal cause,<sup>14</sup> when I had to contend with the pressure of sickness, and with the apprehension of soon losing the sight of my remaining eye, and when my medical attendants clearly announced, that if I did engage in the work, it would be irreparably lost, their premonitions caused no hesitation and inspired no dismay. I would not have listened to the voice even of Esculapius<sup>15</sup> himself from the shrine of Epidaurus, in preference to the suggestions of the heavenly monitor within my breast; my resolution was unshaken, though the alternative was either the loss of my sight, or the desertion of my duty: and I called to mind those two destinies, which the oracle of Delphi announced to the son of Thetis:—

Two fates may lead me to the realms of night;  
 If staying here, around Troy's wall I fight,  
 To my dear home no more must I return;  
 But lasting glory will adorn my urn.  
 But, if I withdraw from the martial strife,  
 Short is my fame, but long will be my life.                    *Il. ix.*

I considered that many had purchased a less good by a greater evil, the meed of glory by the loss of life; but that I

<sup>14</sup> Salmasius' *Defensio Regia pro Carolo Primo* appeared in the early autumn of 1649. In spite of the warnings of physicians about the danger of approaching blindness, Milton had his *Defensio* ready to go through the press in March, 1651.

<sup>15</sup> The shrine of Æsculapius, the god of medicine and healing, was traditionally in Epidaurus in the Peloponnesus.

might procure great good by little suffering; that though I am blind, I might still discharge the most honorable duties, the performance of which, as it is something more durable than glory, ought to be an object of superior admiration and esteem; I resolved, therefore, to make the short interval of sight, which was left me to enjoy, as beneficial as possible to the public interest. Thus it is clear by what motives I was governed in the measures which I took, and the losses which I sustained. Let then the calumniators of the divine goodness cease to revile, or to make me the object of their superstitious imaginations. Let them consider, that my situation, such as it is, is neither an object of my shame or my regret, that my resolutions are too firm to be shaken, that I am not depressed by any sense of the divine displeasure; that, on the other hand, in the most momentous periods, I have had full experience of the divine favor and protection; and that, in the solace and the strength which have been infused into me from above, I have been enabled to do the will of God; that I may oftener think on what he has bestowed, than on what he has withheld; that, in short, I am unwilling to exchange my consciousness of rectitude with that of any other person; and that I feel the recollection a treasured store of tranquillity and delight. But, if the choice were necessary, I would, sir, prefer my blindness to yours; yours is a cloud spread over the mind, which darkens both the light of reason and of conscience; mine keeps from my view only the colored surfaces of things, while it leaves me at liberty to contemplate the beauty and stability of virtue and of truth. How many things are there besides which I would not willingly see; how many which I must see against my will; and how few which I feel any anxiety to see! There is, as the apostle has remarked,<sup>16</sup> a way to strength through weakness. Let me then be the most feeble creature alive, as long as that feebleness serves to invigorate the energies of my rational and immortal spirit; as long as in that obscurity, in which I am enveloped, the light of the divine presence more clearly shines, then, in proportion as I am weak,

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<sup>16</sup> "Out of weakness we were made strong." (Heb. xi, 34.)

I shall be invincibly strong; and in proportion as I am blind, I shall more clearly see. O! that I may thus be perfected by feebleness, and irradiated by obscurity! And, indeed, in my blindness, I enjoy in no inconsiderable degree the favor of the Deity, who regards me with more tenderness and compassion in proportion as I am able to behold nothing but himself. Alas! for him who insults me, who maligns and merits public execration! For the divine law not only shields me from injury,<sup>17</sup> but almost renders me too sacred to attack; not indeed so much from the privation of my sight, as from the overshadowing of those heavenly wings which seem to have occasioned this obscurity; and which, when occasioned, he is wont to illuminate with an interior light, more precious and more pure.

To this I ascribe the more tender assiduities of my friends, their soothing attentions, their kind visits, their reverential observances; among whom there are some with whom I may interchange the Pyladean and Thesean dialogue of inseparable friends:—

*Orestes.* Proceed, and be the rudder of my feet.

*Pylades.* Dear to me is the care I take.

And in another place,

Lend your hand to your devoted friend,  
Throw your arm round my neck, and I will conduct  
you on the way.<sup>18</sup>

This extraordinary kindness, which I experience, cannot be any fortuitous combination; and friends, such as mine, do not suppose that all the virtues of a man are contained in his eyes. Nor do the persons of principal distinction in the commonwealth suffer me to be bereaved of comfort, when they see me bereaved of sight, amid the exertions which I made, the zeal

<sup>17</sup> "Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way." (Deut. xxvii, 18.)

<sup>18</sup> Euripides' *Orestes* was mainly responsible for the tradition in the Renaissance as well as in the ancient world that Pylades and Orestes were ideally typical friends. The first of the two passages quoted is from the *Orestes*, 796; the second is from *Hercules Mad*, 1398–1402.

which I showed, and the dangers which I run for the liberty which I love. But, soberly reflecting on the casualties of human life, they show me favor and indulgence, as to a soldier who has served his time, and kindly concede to me an exemption from care and toil. They do not strip me of the badges of honor which I have once worn; they do not deprive me of the places of public trust to which I have been appointed; they do not abridge my salary or emoluments; which, though I may not do so much to deserve as I did formerly, they are too considerate and too kind to take away; and, in short, they honor me as much as the Athenians did those whom they determined to support at the public expense in the Prytaneum.<sup>19</sup> Thus, while both God and man unite in solacing me under the weight of my affliction, let no one lament my loss of sight in so honorable a cause. And let me not indulge in unavailing grief, or want the courage either to despise the revilers of my blindness, or the forbearance easily to pardon the offense.

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You<sup>20</sup> say, that "the fellow having been expelled from the university of Cambridge, on account of his atrocities, had fled his country in disgrace and travelled into Italy." Hence we may discern what little reliance can be placed on the veracity of those from whom you derived your information; for all, who know me, know, that in this place, both you and they have uttered the most abominable falsehoods; as I shall soon make more fully appear. But, when I was expelled from Cambridge, why should I rather travel into Italy, than into France or Holland? where you, though a minister of the Gospel, and yet so vile a miscreant, not only enjoy impunity, but, to the great scandal of the church, pollute the pulpit and the altar by your presence. But why, sir, into Italy? Was it that, like another

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<sup>19</sup> The Prytaneum was a dining hall maintained at public expense in Athens, where, as Milton says, distinguished citizens were entertained. When Socrates was asked at his trial what penalty he thought appropriate for himself, he answered, entertainment for life in the Prytaneum.

<sup>20</sup> *You*: (as Milton supposed) *Morus*. The present selection corresponds with Volume VIII, p. 113, in the Columbia Edition.

Saturn,<sup>21</sup> I might find a hiding-place in Latium? No, it was because I well knew, and have since experienced, that Italy, instead of being, as you suppose, the general receptacle of vice, was the seat of civilization and the hospitable domicile of every species of erudition. "When he returned, he wrote his book on divorce." I wrote nothing more than what Bucer on the Kingdom of Christ, Fagius<sup>22</sup> on Deuteronomy, and Erasmus on the First Epistle to the Corinthians,<sup>23</sup> which was more particularly designed for the instruction of the English, had written before me, for the most useful purposes and with the most disinterested views. Why what was not reprehensible in them, should constitute a charge of criminality against me, I cannot understand; though I regret that I published this work in English; for then it would not have been exposed to the view of those common readers, who are wont to be as ignorant of their own blessings, as they are insensible to others' sufferings.

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I will now mention who and whence I am. I was born at London, of an honest family; my father was distinguished by the undeviating integrity of his life; my mother, by the esteem in which she was held, and the alms which she bestowed. My father destined me from a child to the pursuits of literature; and my appetite for knowledge was so voracious, that, from twelve years of age, I hardly ever left my studies, or went to bed before midnight. This primarily led to my loss of sight. My eyes were naturally weak, and I was subject to frequent head-aches; which, however, could not chill the ardor of my curiosity, or retard the progress of my improvement. My father had me daily instructed in the grammar-school, and by other masters at home. He then, after I had acquired a proficiency in various languages, and had made a considerable

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<sup>21</sup> The legend, to which Virgil refers in *Aeneid* VIII, 319-23, has it that after being driven from Olympus by Jove, Saturn took refuge among the uncivilized mountain tribes of Latium in central Italy, and brought peace and the blessing of laws among them.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Introduction #41 and #43.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Doctrine and Discipline*, note 8 to the Preface.

progress in philosophy, sent me to the University of Cambridge. Here I passed seven years in the usual course of instruction and study, with the approbation of the good, and without any stain upon my character, till I took the degree of Master of Arts. After this I did not, as this miscreant<sup>24</sup> feigns, run away into Italy, but of my own accord retired to my father's house, whither I was accompanied by the regrets of most of the fellows of the college, who showed me no common marks of friendship and esteem. On my father's estate, where he had determined to pass the remainder of his days, I enjoyed an interval of uninterrupted leisure, which I entirely devoted to the perusal of the Greek and Latin classics; though I occasionally visited the metropolis, either for the sake of purchasing books, or of learning something new in mathematics or in music, in which I, at that time, found a source of pleasure and amusement. In this manner I spent five years till my mother's death.

I then became anxious to visit foreign parts, and particularly Italy. My father gave me his permission, and I left home with one servant. On my departure, the celebrated Henry Wotton,<sup>25</sup> who had long been king James's ambassador at Venice, gave me a signal proof of his regard, in an elegant letter which he wrote, breathing not only the warmest friendship, but containing some maxims of conduct which I found very useful in my travels. The noble Thomas Scudamore,<sup>26</sup> king Charles's ambassador, to whom I carried letters of recommendation, received me most courteously at Paris. His lordship gave me a card of introduction to the learned Hugo Grotius,<sup>27</sup> at that

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<sup>24</sup> Morus in *The Cry of the King's Blood*.

<sup>25</sup> Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639) was three times ambassador to Venice. When Milton went to Italy, he was Master of Eton College. His letter of commendation of *Comus* in *Paradise Regained, the Minor Poems, and Samson Agonistes*, pp. 217-8, indicates the cordiality of their relation.

<sup>26</sup> John (according to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, not Thomas) Scudamour, First Viscount (1601-1671), was a devoted Royalist and friend of the high church prelates. He had been ambassador since 1634, and was intimate with Grotius.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Introduction #44 and *Doctrine and Discipline*, Preface, note 7.

time ambassador from the queen of Sweden<sup>28</sup> to the French court; whose acquaintance I anxiously desired, and to whose house I was accompanied by some of his lordship's friends. A few days after, when I set out for Italy, he gave me letters to the English merchants on my route, that they might show me any civilities in their power. Taking ship at Nice, I arrived at Genoa, and afterwards visited Leghorn, Pisa, and Florence. In the latter city, which I have always more particularly esteemed for the elegance of its dialect, its genius, and its taste, I stopped about two months; when I contracted an intimacy with many persons of rank and learning; and was a constant attendant at their literary parties; a practice which prevails there, and tends so much to the diffusion of knowledge, and the preservation of friendship. No time will ever abolish the agreeable recollections which I cherish of Jacob Gaddi,<sup>29</sup> Carolo Dati,<sup>30</sup> Frescobaldo,<sup>31</sup> Coltellino,<sup>32</sup> Bonmatthai,<sup>33</sup> Clementillo,<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Christina of Sweden, whose enjoyment of the *Defence of the English People* gave Milton a satisfaction which he does not try to hide in the second *Defence*.

<sup>29</sup> Jacob Gaddi was the founder of "the whole Gaddian Academy" in Florence, to several of whose members Milton sent greetings in a letter addressed to Carolo Dati in April, 1647. (See C.E. XII, 45-53.)

<sup>30</sup> In letter 34 of *Miscellaneous Correspondence* (C.E. XII, 313-5), which is from Dati to Milton, the latter is thanked for two "erudite poems" and informed that Dati has just been appointed to a chair of Classics in the Florentine Academy. In *Damon's Epitaph*, 136-7, Dati and Francini are mentioned as famous for their learning and poetic gifts, and the tribute from Dati to Milton which is found in *Paradise Regained, the Minor Poems, and Samson Agonistes*, p. 12, indicates his feeling for Milton.

<sup>31</sup> In *Familiar Letters*, 10 (C.E. XII, 53) Milton sends greetings to Frescobaldi, and in *Miscellaneous Correspondence* (C.E. XII, 315) Frescobaldi sends his greetings to Milton.

<sup>32</sup> In *Familiar Letters*, 10 (C.E. XII, 53) Milton sends greetings to Coltellino, and in *Miscellaneous Correspondence* 35 (C.E. XII, 315) Coltellino sends his cordial greetings to Milton.

<sup>33</sup> Milton's eighth *Familiar Letter* is to Benedetto Buonmatthai, thanking him for a "compilation of new institutes of (his) native tongue" and suggesting that in a proposed enlargement of the work there should be an appendix on pronunciation devised particularly for the benefit of foreigners, and a second appendix listing the Italian writers "illustrious in tragedy," "happy in comedy," and "noble in history."

<sup>34</sup> In *Familiar Letters*, 10 (C.E. XII, 53) Milton sends greetings to Clementillo



Francini,<sup>35</sup> and many others. From Florence I went to Siena, thence to Rome, where, after I had spent about two months in viewing the antiquities of that renowned city, where I experienced the most friendly attentions from Lucas Holstein,<sup>36</sup> and other learned and ingenious men, I continued my route to Naples. There I was introduced by a certain recluse, with whom I had travelled from Rome, to John Baptista Manso,<sup>37</sup> marquis of Villa, a nobleman of distinguished rank and authority, to whom Torquato Tasso,<sup>38</sup> the illustrious poet, inscribed his book on friendship. During my stay, he gave me singular proofs of his regard: he himself conducted me round the city, and to the palace of the viceroy; and more than once paid me a visit at my lodgings. On my departure he gravely apologized for not having shown me more civility, which he said he had been restrained from doing, because I had spoken with so little reserve on matters of religion.

When I was preparing to pass over into Sicily and Greece, the melancholy intelligence which I received of the civil commotions in England made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be travelling for amusement abroad, while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home. While I was on my way back to Rome, some merchants informed me that the English Jesuits had formed a plot against me if I returned to

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<sup>35</sup> Besides being mentioned in *Damon's Epitaph*, 136, Antonio Francini receives greetings from Milton in the tenth *Familiar Letter* (C.E. XII, 53), and sends them in *Miscellaneous Correspondence*, 35 (C.E. XII, 315). His Ode to Milton is in *Paradise Regained*, the *Minor Poems*, and *Samson Agonistes*, pp. 6-10.

<sup>36</sup> Lucas Holstein (1596-1661), the German geographer and theologian, had a distinguished career as a papal ambassador before becoming Librarian of the Vatican Library in 1627. In *Familiar Letters*, 9 (C.E. XII, 38-45) Milton writes from Florence on 30 March, 1639, to thank Holstein for showing him some precious Vatican manuscripts and for introducing him to Cardinal Barberini.

<sup>37</sup> Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa (1560-1640), founded the Oziosi and left his fortune to found the Collegio dei Nobili. The best memorial to his life of service to literary men is Torquato Tasso's *Dialogue of Friendship*, which was written for his benefit. In *Damon's Epitaph*, 181, there is a reference to a gift probably of books, which Manso had given to Milton during his Neapolitan visit.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, notes 126 and 128.

Rome, because I had spoken too freely on religion; for it was a rule which I laid down to myself in those places, never to be the first to begin any conversation on religion; but if any questions were put to me concerning my faith, to declare it without any reserve or fear. I, nevertheless, returned to Rome. I took no steps to conceal either my person or my character; and for about the space of two months I again openly defended, as I had done before, the reformed religion in the very metropolis of popery.

By the favor of God, I got safe back to Florence, where I was received with as much affection as if I had returned to my native country. There I stopped as many months as I had done before, except that I made an excursion for a few days to Lucca; and, crossing the Apennines, passed through Bologna and Ferrara to Venice. After I had spent a month in surveying the curiosities of this city, and had put on board a ship the books which I had collected in Italy, I proceeded through Verona and Milan, and along the Leman lake to Geneva. The mention of this city brings to my recollection the slandering More, and makes me again call the Deity to witness, that in all those places in which vice meets with so little discouragement, and is practised with so little shame, I never once deviated from the paths of integrity and virtue, and perpetually reflected that, though my conduct might escape the notice of men, it could not elude the inspection of God. At Geneva I held daily conferences with John Deodati,<sup>39</sup> the learned professor of Theology.

Then pursuing my former route through France, I returned to my native country, after an absence of one year and about three months; at the time when Charles, having broken the peace, was renewing what is called the episcopal war with the Scots, in which the royalists being routed in the first encounter, and the English being universally and justly disaffected, the

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<sup>39</sup> John Diodati (1576-1649), the uncle of Charles Diodati, to whom *Elegies I* and *VI* were addressed, and in whose memory *Damon's Epitaph* was written, was a distinguished theologian all his active life in Geneva. He is best known for his translation of the Bible into Italian, published in 1607. (See Masson's *Milton* I, 99-100.)

necessity of his affairs at last obliged him to convene a parliament. As soon as I was able, I hired a spacious house in the city for myself and my books; where I again with rapture renewed my literary pursuits, and where I calmly awaited the issue of the contest, which I trusted to the wise conduct of Providence, and to the courage of the people. The vigor of the parliament had begun to humble the pride of the bishops.

As long as the liberty of speech was no longer subject to control, all mouths began to be opened against the bishops; some complained of the vices of the individuals, others of those of the order. They said that it was unjust that they alone should differ from the model of other reformed churches; that the government of the church should be according to the pattern of other churches, and particularly the word of God. This awakened all my attention and my zeal. I saw that a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition; that the principles of religion, which were the first objects of our care, would exert a salutary influence on the manners and constitution of the republic; and as I had from my youth studied the distinctions between religious and civil rights, I perceived that if I ever wished to be of use, I ought at least not to be wanting to my country, to the church, and to so many of my fellow-Christians, in a crisis of so much danger.

I therefore determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object. I accordingly wrote two books to a friend concerning the reformation of the church of England. Afterwards, when two bishops<sup>40</sup> of superior distinction vindicated their privileges against some principal ministers,<sup>41</sup> I thought that on those topics, to the consideration of which I was led solely by my love of truth, and my reverence for Christianity, I should not probably write

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<sup>40</sup> Bishop Hall (cf. Introduction #17, 19, 25, 28, 35, 55, and 66) and Archbishop Ussher (cf. Introduction #27 and C.G., note 37).

<sup>41</sup> *The Smectymnuans*. Cf. Introduction #19.

worse than those who were contending only for their own emoluments and usurpations. I therefore answered the one in two books, of which the first is inscribed, Concerning Prelatical Episcopacy, and the other Concerning the Mode of Ecclesiastical Government; and I replied to the other in some Animadversions, and soon after in an Apology. On this occasion it was supposed that I brought a timely succor to the ministers, who were hardly a match for the eloquence of their opponents; and from that time I was actively employed in refuting any answers that appeared.

When the bishops could no longer resist the multitude of their assailants, I had leisure to turn my thoughts to other subjects, to the promotion of real and substantial liberty, which is rather to be sought from within than from without, and whose existence depends, not so much on the terror of the sword as on sobriety of conduct and integrity of life. When, therefore, I perceived that there were three species of liberty which are essential to the happiness of social life—religious, domestic,<sup>42</sup> and civil; and as I had already written concerning the first, and the magistrates were strenuously active in obtaining the third, I determined to turn my attention to the second, or the domestic species. As this seemed to involve three material questions, the conditions of the conjugal tie, the education of the children, and the free publication of the thoughts, I made them objects of distinct consideration. I explained my sentiments, not only concerning the solemnization of the marriage, but the dissolution, if circumstances rendered it necessary; and I drew my arguments from the divine law, which Christ did not abolish, or publish another more grievous than that of Moses. I stated my own opinions, and those of others, concerning the exclusive exception of fornication, which our illustrious Selden<sup>43</sup> has since, in his *Hebrew Wife*,<sup>44</sup> more copi-

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Introduction #52.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Areopagitica*, note 103, and Introduction #42.

<sup>44</sup> For the relation of Selden's *Uxor Hebraica* (which was not published until three years later than *Divorce*) see Eivion Owen, "Milton and Selden on Divorce," in *S. P.* XLIII (1946), 233-257.

ously discussed; for he in vain makes a vaunt of liberty in the senate or in the forum, who languishes under the vilest servitude, to an inferior at home. On this subject, therefore, I published some books which were more particularly necessary at that time, when man and wife were often the most inveterate foes, when the man often stayed to take care of his children at home, while the mother of the family was seen in the camp of the enemy, threatening death and destruction to her husband. I then discussed the principles of education in a summary manner, but sufficiently copious for those who attend seriously to the subject; than which nothing can be more necessary to principle the minds of men in virtue, the only genuine source of political and individual liberty, the only true safeguard of states, the bulwark of their prosperity and renown. Lastly, I wrote my *Areopagitica*, in order to deliver the press from the restraints with which it was encumbered; that the power of determining what was true and what was false, what ought to be published and what to be suppressed, might no longer be entrusted to a few illiterate and illiberal individuals, who refused their sanction to any work which contained views or sentiments at all above the level of the vulgar superstition.

On the last species of civil liberty, I said nothing, because I saw that sufficient attention was paid to it by the magistrates; nor did I write anything on the prerogative of the crown, till the king, voted an enemy by the parliament, and vanquished in the field, was summoned before the tribunal which condemned him to lose his head. But when, at length, some presbyterian ministers, who had formerly been the most bitter enemies to Charles, became jealous of the growth of the independents, and of their ascendancy in the parliament, most tumultuously clamored against the sentence, and did all in their power to prevent the execution,<sup>45</sup> though they were not angry, so much on account of the act itself, as because it was not the act of their party; and when they dared to affirm, that the doctrine of the protestants, and of all the reformed churches, was abhorrent to

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Introduction #87.

such an atrocious proceeding against kings; I thought that it became me to oppose such a glaring falsehood; and accordingly, without any immediate or personal application to Charles, I showed, in an abstract consideration of the question, what might lawfully be done against tyrants; and in support of what I advanced, produced the opinions of the most celebrated divines; while I vehemently inveighed against the egregious ignorance or effrontery of men, who professed better things, and from whom better things might have been expected. That book did not make its appearance till after the death of Charles; and was written rather to reconcile the minds of the people to the event, than to discuss the legitimacy of that particular sentence which concerned the magistrates, and which was already executed.<sup>46</sup>

Such were the fruits of my private studies, which I gratuitously presented to the church and to the state; and for which I was recompensed by nothing but impunity; though the actions themselves procured me peace of conscience, and the approbation of the good; while I exercised that freedom of discussion which I loved. Others, without labor or desert, got possession of honors and emoluments; but no one ever knew me either soliciting anything myself or through the medium of my friends, ever beheld me in a supplicating posture at the doors of the senate, or the levees of the great. I usually kept myself secluded at home, where my own property, part of which had been withheld during the civil commotions, and part of which had been absorbed in the oppressive contributions which I had to sustain, afforded me a scanty subsistence. When I was released from these engagements, and thought that I was about to enjoy an interval of uninterrupted ease, I turned my thoughts to a continued history of my country, from the earliest times to the present period. I had already finished four books, when, after the subversion of the monarchy, and the establishment of a republic, I was surprised by an invitation from the council of state, who desired my services in the office

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<sup>46</sup> Internal evidence shows that at least parts of the *Tenure* were written during the trial of the king.

for foreign affairs. A book appeared soon after, which was ascribed to the king, and contained the most invidious charges against the parliament. I was ordered to answer it; and opposed the Iconoclast to his Icon. I did not insult over fallen majesty, as is pretended; I only preferred queen Truth to king Charles. The charge of insult, which I saw that the malevolent would urge, I was at some pains to remove in the beginning of the work; and as often as possible in other places. Salmasius<sup>47</sup> then appeared, to whom they were not, as More<sup>48</sup> says, long in looking about for an opponent, but immediately appointed me, who happened at the time to be present in the council. I have thus, sir, given some account of myself, in order to stop your mouth, and to remove any prejudices which your falsehoods and misrepresentations might cause even good men to entertain against me.

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Oliver Cromwell<sup>49</sup> was sprung from a line of illustrious ancestors, who were distinguished for the civil functions which they sustained under the monarchy, and still more for the part which they took in restoring and establishing true religion in this country. In the vigor and maturity of his life, which he passed in retirement, he was conspicuous for nothing more than for the strictness of his religious habits, and the innocence of his life, and he had tacitly cherished in his breast that flame of piety which was afterwards to stand him in so much stead on the greatest occasions, and in the most critical exigencies. In the last parliament which was called by the king, he was elected to represent his native town,<sup>50</sup> when he soon became distinguished by the justness of his opinions, and the vigor and decision of his councils.

When the sword was drawn, he offered his services, and was appointed to a troop of horse, whose numbers were soon

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, note 75.

<sup>48</sup> *More*: Morus. Cf. note 1 above.

<sup>49</sup> This eulogy of Cromwell will be found in the Columbia Edition, Vol. VII, pp. 213 ff.

<sup>50</sup> *his native town*: Cambridge.

increased by the pious and the good, who flocked from all quarters to his standard; and in a short time he almost surpassed the greatest generals in the magnitude and the rapidity of his achievements. Nor is this surprising; for he was a soldier disciplined to perfection in the knowledge of himself. He had either extinguished, or by habit had learned to subdue, the whole host of vain hopes, fears, and passions, which infest the soul. He first acquired the government of himself, and over himself acquired the most signal victories; so that on the first day he took the field against the external enemy, he was a veteran in arms, consummately practised in the toils and exigencies of war.

It is not possible for me in the narrow limits in which I circumscribe myself on this occasion, to enumerate the many towns which he has taken, the many battles which he has won. The whole surface of the British empire has been the scene of his exploits, and the theatre of his triumphs; which alone would furnish ample materials for a history, and want a copiousness of narration not inferior to the magnitude and diversity of the transactions. This alone seems to be a sufficient proof of his extraordinary and almost supernatural virtue, that by the vigor of his genius, or the excellence of his discipline, adapted, not more to the necessities of war than to the precepts of Christianity, the good and the brave were from all quarters attracted to his camp, not only as to the best school of military talents, but of piety and virtue; and that during the whole war, and the occasional intervals of peace, amid so many vicissitudes of faction and of events, he retained and still retains the obedience of his troops, not by largesses or indulgence, but by his sole authority and the regularity of his pay. In this instance his fame may rival that of Cyrus,<sup>51</sup> of Epaminondas,<sup>52</sup> or any of the great generals of antiquity. Hence he collected an army as

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Church Government*, note 9.

<sup>52</sup> The Theban patriot, Epaminondas, assisted in the expulsion of the Spartans from Thebes in 379 B.C., defeated them and broke their domination of all Greece at the battle of Leuctra in 371, and later made four successful expeditions against the Spartans in the Peloponnesus.



numerous and as well equipped as any one ever did in so short a time; which was uniformly obedient to his orders, and dear to the affections of the citizens; which was formidable to the enemy in the field, but never cruel to those who laid down their arms; which committed no lawless ravages on the persons or the property of the inhabitants; who, when they compared their conduct with the turbulence, the intemperance, the impiety, and the debauchery of the royalists, were wont to salute them as friends, and to consider them as guests. They were a stay to the good, a terror to the evil, and the warmest advocates for every exertion of piety and virtue.

Nor would it be right to pass over the name of Fairfax,<sup>53</sup> who united the utmost fortitude with the utmost courage; and the spotless innocence of whose life seemed to point him out as the peculiar favorite of Heaven. Justly, indeed, may you be excited to receive this wreath of praise; though you have retired as much as possible from the world, and seek those shades of privacy which were the delight of Scipio.<sup>54</sup> Nor was it only the enemy whom you subdued, but you have triumphed over that flame of ambition and that lust of glory which are wont to make the best and the greatest of men their slaves. The purity of your virtues and the splendor of your actions consecrate those sweets of ease which you enjoy, and which constitute the wished-for haven of the toils of man. Such was the ease which, when the heroes of antiquity possessed, after a life of exertion and glory not greater than yours, the poets, in despair of finding ideas or expressions better suited to the subject, feigned that they were received into heaven, and invited to recline at the tables of the gods. But whether it were your

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<sup>53</sup> Sir Thomas Fairfax, third Viscount Fairfax (1612-1671) was from the first a leading parliamentary general. He commanded the left wing at Marston Moor, became commander-in-chief of the New Model Army, conquered at Naseby, and took a decisive part in putting down the Royalists in the Second Civil War. He was not in sympathy with the trial of Charles, and after the first sitting of the High Court of Justice, of which he was appointed a member, he did not attend again. In June, 1650, he resigned as commander-in-chief and was succeeded by Cromwell. Cf. the sonnet *To the Lord General Fairfax*, and the *Tenure*, note 24.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Areopagitica*, note 52.

health, which I principally believe, or any other motive which caused you to retire, of this I am convincèd, that nothing could have induced you to relinquish the service of your country, if you had not known that in your successor liberty would meet with a protector, and England with a stay to its safety, and a pillar to its glory. For, while you, O Cromwell, are left among us, he hardly shows a proper confidence in the Supreme, who distrusts the security of England; when he sees that you are in so special a manner the favored object of the divine regard.

But there was another department of the war, which was destined for your exclusive exertions. Without entering into any length of detail, I will, if possible, describe some of the most memorable actions,<sup>55</sup> with as much brevity as you performed them with celerity. After the loss of all Ireland, with the exception of one city, you in one battle immediately discomfited the forces of the rebels: and were busily employed in settling the country, when you were suddenly recalled to the war in Scotland. Hence you proceeded with unwearied diligence against the Scots, who were on the point of making an irruption into England with the king in their train: and in about the space of one year you entirely subdued, and added to the English dominion, that kingdom which all our monarchs, during a period of 800 years, had in vain struggled to subject. In one battle you almost annihilated the remainder of their forces, who, in a fit of desperation, had made a sudden incursion into England, then almost destitute of garrisons, and got as far as Worcester; where you came up with them by forced marches, and captured almost the whole of their nobility.

A profound peace ensued; when we found, though indeed not then for the first time, that you was as wise in the cabinet as valiant in the field. It was your constant endeavor in the senate either to induce them to adhere to those treaties which they had entered into with the enemy, or speedily to adjust others which promised to be beneficial to the country. But when you saw that the business was artfully procrastinated,

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<sup>55</sup> For the following events in Cromwell's life consult the Chronological Table.

that every one was more intent on his own selfish interest than on the public good, that the people complained of the disappointments which they had experienced, and the fallacious promises by which they had been gulled, that they were the dupes of a few overbearing individuals, you put an end to their domination. A new parliament<sup>56</sup> is summoned; and the right of election given to those to whom it was expedient. They meet; but do nothing; and, after having wearied themselves by their mutual dissensions, and fully exposed their incapacity to the observation of the country, they consent to a voluntary dissolution.

In this state of desolation, to which we were reduced, you, O Cromwell! alone remained to conduct the government, and to save the country. We all willingly yield the palm of sovereignty to your unrivalled ability and virtue, except the few among us, who, either ambitious of honors which they have not the capacity to sustain, or who envy those which are conferred on one more worthy than themselves, or else who do not know that nothing in the world is more pleasing to God, more agreeable to reason, more politically just, or more generally useful, than that the supreme power should be vested in the best and the wisest of men. Such, O Cromwell, all acknowledge you to be; such are the services which you have rendered, as the leader of our councils, the general of our armies, and the father of your country. For this is the tender appellation by which all the good among us salute you from the very soul. Other names you neither have nor could endure; and you deservedly reject that pomp of title which attracts the gaze and admiration of the multitude. For what is a title but a certain definite mode of dignity; but actions such as yours surpass, not only the bounds of our admiration, but our titles; and, like the points of pyramids, which are lost in the clouds, they soar above the possibilities of titular commendation. But since, though it be not fit, it may be expedient, that the high-

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<sup>56</sup> The Little Parliament of 1553, which was composed of 140 members mainly nominated on the invitation of the council of the army acting with Cromwell by the Congregational churches in every county.

est pitch of virtue should be circumscribed within the bounds of some human appellation, you endured to receive, for the public good, a title most like to that of the father of your country; not to exalt, but rather to bring you nearer to the level of ordinary men; the title of king was unworthy the transcendent majesty of your character. For if you had been captivated by a name over which, as a private man, you had so completely triumphed and crumbled into dust, you would have been doing the same thing as if, after having subdued some idolatrous nation by the help of the true God, you should afterwards fall down and worship the gods which you had vanquished.

Do you then, sir, continue your course with the same unrivalled magnanimity; it sits well upon you;—to you our country owes its liberties; nor can you sustain a character at once more momentous and more august than that of the author, the guardian, and the preserver of our liberties; and hence you have not only eclipsed the achievements of all our kings, but even those which have been fabled of our heroes. Often reflect what a dear pledge the beloved land of your nativity has entrusted to your care; and that liberty which she once expected only from the chosen flower of her talents and her virtues, she now expects from you only, and by you only hopes to obtain. Revere the fond expectations which we cherish, the solitudes of your anxious country; revere the looks and the wounds of your brave companions in arms, who, under your banners, have so strenuously fought for liberty; revere the shades of those who perished in the contest; revere also the opinions and the hopes which foreign states entertain concerning us, who promise to themselves so many advantages from that liberty which we have so bravely acquired, from the establishment of that new government which has begun to shed its splendor on the world, which, if it be suffered to vanish like a dream, would involve us in the deepest abyss of shame; and lastly, revere yourself; and, after having endured so many sufferings and encountered so many perils for the sake of liberty, do not suffer it, now it is obtained, either to be

violated by yourself, or in any one instance impaired by others. You cannot be truly free unless we are free too; for such is the nature of things, that he who entrenches on the liberty of others, is the first to lose his own and become a slave.

But if you, who have hitherto been the patron and tutelary genius of liberty, if you, who are exceeded by no one in justice, in piety, and goodness, should hereafter invade that liberty which you have defended, your conduct must be fatally operative, not only against the cause of liberty, but the general interests of piety and virtue. Your integrity and virtue will appear to have evaporated, your faith in religion to have been small; your character with posterity will dwindle into insignificance, by which a most destructive blow will be levelled against the happiness of mankind.

The work which you have undertaken is of incalculable moment, which will thoroughly sift and expose every principle and sensation of your heart, which will fully display the vigor and genius of your character, which will evince whether you really possess those great qualities of piety, fidelity, justice, and self-denial, which made us believe that you were elevated by the special direction of the Deity to the highest pinnacle of power. At once wisely and discreetly to hold the sceptre over three powerful nations, to persuade people to relinquish inveterate and corrupt for new and more beneficial maxims and institutions, to penetrate into the remotest parts of the country, to have the mind present and operative in every quarter, to watch against surprise, to provide against danger, to reject the blandishments of pleasure and pomp of power;—these are exertions compared with which the labor of war is mere pastime; which will require every energy and employ every faculty that you possess; which demand a man supported from above, and almost instructed by immediate inspiration.

These and more than these are, no doubt, the objects which occupy your attention and engross your soul; as well as the means by which you may accomplish these important ends, and render our liberty at once more ample and more secure. And this you can, in my opinion, in no other way so readily effect,

as by associating in your councils the companions of your dangers and your toils; men of exemplary modesty, integrity, and courage; whose hearts have not been hardened in cruelty and rendered insensible to pity by the sight of so much ravage and so much death, but whom it has rather inspired with the love of justice, with a respect for religion, and with the feeling of compassion, and who are more zealously interested in the preservation of liberty, in proportion as they have encountered more perils in its defence.

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THE READY AND EASY WAY  
TO ESTABLISH  
A FREE COMMONWEALTH,  
AND THE EXCELLENCE THEREOF,  
COMPARED WITH THE INCONVENIENCES AND DANGERS OF  
READMITTING KINGSHIP IN THIS NATION.

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"Et nos  
Consilium dedimus Syllæ, demus populo nunc."<sup>1</sup>

ALTHOUGH since the writing of this treatise the face of things hath had some change, writs for new elections have been recalled, and the members at first chosen re-admitted<sup>2</sup> from exclusion, yet not a little rejoicing to hear declared the resolution<sup>3</sup> of those who are in power tending to the establishment of a free commonwealth, and to remove, if it be

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<sup>1</sup> The motto, an adaptation of Juvenal's first *Satire*, 15-7, may be rendered:

Because we have advised Sulla himself,

We may now advise the people.

After recommending a perpetual grand council to govern England in a personal letter to General Monk (*The Present Means and Brief Declaration of a Free Commonwealth*), Milton is bold to address Englishmen generally. He had taken a risk like that which would have been taken by a Roman bold enough to defend republican principles to Sulla when his army crushed the popular party and massacred thousands whom he proscribed to consolidate his dictatorship in 82 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> On 21 February, 1660, under pressure from General Monk, the Rump Parliament admitted the members who had been "purged" by Colonel Pride in 1648. They were, of course, Presbyterian and prevailingly Royalist in sympathy.

<sup>3</sup> Before dissolving, the Rump provided that, although the elections for the new Parliament to meet on 26 April were to be free, Royalists should at least nominally be incapable of being elected. There were many republicans still in the army, and Monk as recently as 21 February had declared himself opposed to the restoration of Charles Stuart.

possible, this noxious humor of returning to bondage—instilled of late by some deceivers,<sup>4</sup> and nourished from bad principles and false apprehensions<sup>5</sup> among too many of the people—, I thought best not to suppress what I had written, hoping that it may now be of much more use and concernment to be freely published, in the midst of our elections to a free parliament, or their sitting to consider freely of the government (whom it behoves to have all things represented to them that may direct their judgment therein) and I never read of any state, scarce of any tyrant, grown so incurable as to refuse counsel from any in a time of public deliberation, much less to be offended. If their absolute determination be to enthrall us, before so long a Lent of servitude they may permit us a little shroving-time first, wherein to speak freely and take our leaves of liberty. And because in the former edition, through haste, many faults escaped, and many books were suddenly dispersed ere the note to mend them could be sent, I took the opportunity from this occasion to revise and somewhat to enlarge the whole discourse, especially that part which argues for a perpetual senate. The treatise thus revised and enlarged, is as follows:

The Parliament of England, assisted by a great number of the people who appeared and stuck to them faithfulest in defence of religion and their civil liberties, judging kingship by long experience a government unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous, justly and magnanimously abolished it,<sup>6</sup> turning regal bondage into a free commonwealth, to the admiration

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<sup>4</sup> Milton identifies one of the deceivers in his *Brief Notes upon a late Sermon titl'd The Fear of God and the King; Preach'd and since publish'd, by Matthew Griffith, D.D.* For another of them, see the Introduction #93.

<sup>5</sup> When Monk left Scotland to lead his forces to London, he himself was not sure of his purpose. His use of force to compel the Londoners, who were said to be seven-eighths Royalist, to some measure of obedience to the wishes of the Rump, and to compel the Rump shortly after to seat its secluded members, seemed to portend a military dictatorship.

<sup>6</sup> By resolution on 7 February, 1649,—just nine days after the execution of Charles I—the Rump had declared the office and power of a king unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous to liberty, safety, and public interest.



and terror of our emulous<sup>7</sup> neighbors. They took themselves not bound by the light of nature<sup>8</sup> or religion to any former covenant,<sup>9</sup> from which the king himself, by many forfeitures of a latter date or discovery, and our own longer consideration thereon, had more and more unbound us, both to himself and his posterity, as hath been ever the justice and the prudence of all wise nations that have ejected tyranny. They covenanted "to preserve the king's person and authority in the preservation of the true religion and our liberties," not in his endeavoring to bring in upon our consciences a popish religion,<sup>10</sup> upon our liberties, thraldoms; upon our lives, destruction by his occasioning (if not complotting, as was after discovered) the Irish massacre;<sup>11</sup> his fomenting and arming the rebellion, his covert leaguings with the rebels against us, his refusing, more than seven times, propositions<sup>12</sup> most just and necessary to the true religion and our liberties, tendered him by the parliament both of England and Scotland. They made not their covenant concerning him with no difference between a

<sup>7</sup> England's diplomatic position was hardly improved by the execution of Charles, but by 1658 naval successes against the Dutch and later military successes jointly with the French against the Spaniards in Flanders had made England perhaps the most powerful country in Europe.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Tenure*, note 32.

<sup>9</sup> For the Solemn League and Covenant see *Areopagitica*, note 203, and the *Tenure*, note 17.

<sup>10</sup> Many Puritan pamphlets in the civil wars were full of hysterical fear that Charles, because of his tolerance of his French queen's Catholicism, and because of his support of Laud's efforts to enhance the formal value of Anglican worship, was conspiring to re-establish "popery." (Cf. *C.G.*, notes 6, 50, 86, 95, and 149.)

<sup>11</sup> In the attacks of the Irish on the English in Ulster, which began with the massacre of 23 October, 1641, Charles had no interest; but in 1643 he authorized Lord Ormond to offer the Irish a free parliament in order to secure their military support. Various Irish negotiations were continued until 1648. Cf. *Tenure*, note 34.

<sup>12</sup> The Nineteen Propositions submitted to Charles by parliamentary commissioners on 2 June, 1642, the Treaty of Oxford, February, 1643, the Treaty of Uxbridge, February, 1645, the Proposals of the Scots, February and March, 1646, the Propositions of 21 April, 1647, and the Treaty of Newport, October, 1648, may be the seven propositions which Milton had in mind.

king and a god, or promised him, as Job did to the Almighty, "to trust in him though he slay us:"<sup>13</sup> they understood that the solemn engagement wherein we all forswore kingship, was no more a breach of the covenant than the covenant was of the protestation before,<sup>14</sup> but a faithful and prudent going on both in the words, well weighed, and in the true sense of the covenant, "without respect of persons,"<sup>15</sup> when we could not serve two contrary masters, God and the king, or the king and that more supreme law sworn in the first place to maintain our safety and our liberty.<sup>16</sup>

They knew the people of England to be a free people, themselves the representers of that freedom;<sup>17</sup> and although many were excluded, and as many fled (so they pretended) from tumults to Oxford,<sup>18</sup> yet they were left a sufficient number to act in parliament: therefore not bound by any statute of preceding parliaments but by the law of nature only, which is the only law of laws truly and properly to all mankind fundamental,<sup>19</sup> the beginning and the end of all government, to which no parliament or people that will thoroughly reform but may and must have recourse—as they had, and must yet have, in church reformation (if they thoroughly intend it) to

<sup>13</sup> Job xiii, 15.

<sup>14</sup> The formal protest of Parliament on 3 May, 1641, against "a Popish Army levied in Ireland, and Two Armies brought into the Bowels of this Kingdom, to the hazard of His Majesty's Royal Person." It bound its signers to support "the Doctrine of the Church of England" and to "defend His Majesty's Royal Person and Estate." Cf. Introduction #85.

<sup>15</sup> The Solemn League and Covenant, which had been restored on 5 March, 1660, used the words "without respect of persons" of the engagement to extirpate popery.

<sup>16</sup> For some Catholic and Protestant affirmations of the traditional principle that men's highest loyalty is not due to princes, see the Introduction #88.

<sup>17</sup> See the Introduction #87.

<sup>18</sup> About 175 members of both houses, most of them from the House of Lords, withdrew from Westminster to set up a Royalist Parliament at the king's military headquarters in Oxford, and on 22 January, 1644, Charles opened its first and only sitting, which lasted about three months. Nearly 300 remained at Westminster.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Tenure*, note 32.

evangelic rules,<sup>20</sup> not to ecclesiastical canons<sup>21</sup> though never so ancient, so ratified and established in the land by statutes which for the most part are mere positive laws,<sup>22</sup> neither natural nor moral—and so by any parliament, for just and serious considerations, without scruple to be at any time repealed.

If others of their number in these things were under force,<sup>23</sup> they were not, but under free conscience; if others were excluded by a power which they could not resist, they were not therefore to leave the helm of government in no hands, to discontinue their care of the public peace and safety, to desert the people in anarchy and confusion, no more than when so many of their members left them as made up in outward formality a more legal parliament of three estates<sup>24</sup> against them. The best affected<sup>25</sup> also and best principled of the people stood not numbering or computing on which side were most voices in parliament, but on which side appeared to them most reason, most safety, when the house divided upon main matters. What was well motioned and advised, they examined not whether fear or persuasion carried it in the vote, neither did they measure votes and counsels by the intentions of them that voted, knowing that intentions either are but guessed at, or not soon enough known, and, although good, can neither

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<sup>20</sup> Milton's early faith in the permanent value of the organization of the primitive church gets classic expression in his praise of the "heavenly structure of evangelic discipline" in *Church Government* I, ii.

<sup>21</sup> Milton's attitude toward canon law is best indicated in the divorce tracts. Cf. Introduction #43.

<sup>22</sup> *positive laws*: legislative enactments of any kind, as opposed to natural law.

<sup>23</sup> From the Declaration of the Army on 15 June, 1647, which asked that Parliament be purged and agree to several other severe demands, until Pride's purge on 6 December, 1648, Parliament was under constant pressure from the Army. Here Milton answers the charge which Sir Roger L'Estrange had just brought in *Reply to Plain English* that Cromwell had extorted Parliament's decision on 3 January, 1648, to attempt no more negotiation with Charles by personally threatening it in a speech delivered with his hand on his sword.

<sup>24</sup> *three estates*: the bishops or lords spiritual, the nobles or lords temporal, and the commons.

<sup>25</sup> *best affected*: favorably inclined (i.e., to the virtual republic or Commonwealth which was established after the execution of Charles).

make the deed such, nor prevent the consequence from being bad. Suppose bad intentions in things otherwise well done; what was well done was by them who so thought not the less obeyed or followed in the state, since in the church, who had not rather follow Iscariot<sup>26</sup> or Simon,<sup>27</sup> the magician, though to covetous ends, preaching, than Saul, though in the uprightness of his heart persecuting the gospel?

Safer they, therefore, judged what they thought the better counsels, though carried on by some perhaps to bad ends, than the worse by others, though endeavored with best intentions. And yet they were not to learn<sup>28</sup> that a greater number might be corrupt within the walls of a parliament as well as of a city; whereof in matters of nearest concernment all men will be judges, nor easily permit that the odds of voices in their greatest council shall more endanger them by corrupt or credulous votes, than the odds of enemies by open assaults; judging that most voices ought not always to prevail, where main matters are in question.<sup>29</sup> If others hence will pretend to disturb all counsels, what is that to them who pretend not, but are in real danger—not they only so judging, but a great, though not the greatest, number of their chosen patriots, who might be more in weight than the others in number: there being in number little virtue, but by weight and measure wisdom working all things, and the dangers on either side they seriously thus weighed.

From the treaty,<sup>30</sup> short fruits of long labors, and seven

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<sup>26</sup> *Iscariot*: Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

<sup>27</sup> Simon Magus, who "used sorcery" and offered Peter and John money for their gift of imparting the Holy Ghost (Acts viii, 9–25), left the name of simony for the crime of abusing any ecclesiastical position for financial gain. Milton's implied acknowledgement of graft in the Long Parliament was sustained by much incontrovertible evidence and still more by stubborn rumors.

<sup>28</sup> *they were not to learn*: they did not need to learn, or to be told.

<sup>29</sup> "Nothing is more agreeable to the order of nature," wrote Milton in the second *Defence*, "or more for the interest of mankind, than that the less should yield to the greater, not in numbers, but in reason and virtue." Cf. the Introduction #88 and 94.

<sup>30</sup> The Commons rejected Charles's proposals in the Treaty of Newport, 27 October, 1648, because he would not grant more than ten of the

years' war, security for twenty years, if we can hold it, reformation in the church for three years, then put to shift again with our vanquished master. His justice, his honor, his conscience declared quite contrary to ours, which would have furnished him with many such evasions as in a book entitled "An Inquisition for Blood"<sup>31</sup> soon after were not concealed: bishops not totally removed (but left, as it were in ambush, a reserve) with ordination in their sole power; their lands already sold, not to be alienated, but rented, and the sale of them called "sacrilege;"<sup>32</sup> delinquents, few of many brought to condign punishment; accessories punished,<sup>33</sup> the chief author above pardon, though after utmost resistance vanquished; not to give, but to receive, laws; yet besought, treated with, and to be thanked for his gracious concessions, to be honored, worshipped, glorified.

If this we swore to do, with what righteousness in the sight of God, with what assurance that we bring not by such an oath the whole sea of blood-guiltiness upon our heads?<sup>34</sup> If on the other side we prefer a free government, though for the present not obtained, yet all those suggested fears and difficulties twenty years' control of the army for which they asked, and because he refused (1) to abolish episcopacy, (2) to permit final alienation of the bishops' lands, (3) to bind himself to more than three years' guarantee of a Presbyterian establishment, or (4) drop his demand for an act of oblivion in favor of his supporters, many of whom Parliament had treated as delinquents and punished by sequestering and selling their estates.

<sup>31</sup> James Howell's *An Inquisition for Blood, to the Parliament and the Army*, was published in July, 1649. It asserted that "those Lawes that so strictly inhibit English subjects to raise Armes against their king are still in force." (P. 4.) In "the transactions of the late Treaty," it pleaded that Charles had acted "in his *politic* capacity," and so had not been in any way personally prejudiced by his pledges, or bound by them.

<sup>32</sup> In the discussion of the Treaty of Newport Charles took the attitude expressed in *Eikon Basilike*; that his conscience would not let him "swallow down such camels as others do of sacrilege and injustice both to God and man." In reply in *Eikonoklastes* Milton said that what the king called sacrilege was "taking from the clergy that superfluous wealth, which antiquity as old as Constantine . . . counted 'poison in the church.'" (C. E. V, 187.)

<sup>33</sup> accessories: principally, the Earl of Strafford and Archbishop Laud.

<sup>34</sup> If Charles was a "murderer," as Milton calls him below for his "blood-guiltiness" in the civil wars, leniency to him would make his judges participators in his guilt.

culties, as the event will prove, easily overcome, we remain finally secure from the exasperated regal power and out of snares, shall retain the best part of our liberty, which is our religion, and the civil part will be from these who defer<sup>35</sup> us much more easily recovered, being neither so subtle nor so awful as a king reënthroned. Nor were their actions less both at home and abroad than might become the hopes of a glorious, rising commonwealth: nor were the expressions both of army and people, whether in their public declarations or several writings, other than such as testified a spirit in this nation no less noble and well-fitted to the liberty of a commonwealth, than in the ancient Greeks or Romans.<sup>36</sup> Nor was the heroic cause unsuccessfully defended to all Christendom against the tongue of a famous and thought invincible adversary,<sup>37</sup> nor the constancy and fortitude that so nobly vindicated our liberty, our victory at once against two the most prevailing usurpers over mankind, superstition and tyranny, unpraised or uncelebrated in a written monument likely to outlive detraction, as it hath hitherto convinced or silenced not a few of our detractors, especially in parts abroad.

After our liberty and religion thus prosperously fought for, gained, and many years possessed (except in those unhappy interruptions which God hath removed), now that nothing remains but in all reason the certain hopes of a speedy and immediate settlement for ever in a firm and free commonwealth, for this extolled and magnified nation—regardless both

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<sup>35</sup> *defer*: put off. The worst that the temporizing soldiers and politicians could do would not be either so insidious or dreadful as Milton feared would be the fate of men of his opinions from a restored Charles II.

<sup>36</sup> See Introduction #36.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the allusion to Salmasius in *Church Government* I, vi, and note 52 there. In 1649 he was engaged by Charles II to write *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I*, to which Milton replied in 1651 with his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*. The reaction from the strain of writing this tract just as total blindness was overtaking him, together with its unquestionable success in deflating Salmasius' reputation on the Continent, fully excuse, if they do not justify, Milton's picture of himself in his second *Defence* as "surrounded by congregated multitudes," and able to "imagine that, from the columns of Hercules to the Indian Ocean" he beheld "the nations of the earth recovering that liberty which they so long had lost."

of honor won or deliverances vouchsafed from heaven—to fall back, or rather to creep back so poorly, as it seems the multitude would to their once abjured and detested thralldom of kingship, to be ourselves the slanderers of our own just and religious deeds (though done by some to covetous and ambitious ends, yet not therefore to be stained with their infamy, or they to asperse the integrity of others; and yet these now by revolting from the conscience of deeds well done, both in church and state, to throw away and forsake, or rather to betray a just and noble cause for the mixture of bad men who have ill-managed and abused it—which had our fathers done heretofore, and on the same pretence deserted true religion, what had long ere this become of our gospel and all protestant reformation so much intermixed with the avarice and ambition of some reformers?) and by thus relapsing, to verify all the bitter predictions of our triumphing enemies, who will now think they wisely discerned and justly censured both us and all our actions as rash, rebellious, hypocritical, and impious; not only argues a strange, degenerate contagion suddenly spread among us, fitted and prepared for new slavery, but will render us a scorn and derision to all our neighbors.

And what will they at best say of us and of the whole English name but scoffingly, as of that foolish builder mentioned by our Saviour, who began to build a tower and was not able to finish it?<sup>38</sup> Where is this goodly tower of a commonwealth which the English boasted they would build to overshadow kings and be another Rome<sup>39</sup> in the west? The foundation indeed they laid gallantly, but fell into a worse confusion, not of tongues but of factions, than those at the tower of Babel; and have left no memorial of their work behind them remaining but in the common laughter of Europe! Which must needs redound the more to our shame, if we but look on our neighbors the United Provinces,<sup>40</sup> to us inferior in all outward

<sup>38</sup> The parable in Luke xiv, 28–30, was a rebuke to the half-hearted.

<sup>39</sup> Milton betrays his own hope that England's expulsion of her kings would lead to a future equal to that of republican Rome.

<sup>40</sup> *United Provinces*: the Netherlands, to which Milton refers later as a strong, though imperfect, commonwealth or aristocracy.

advantages; who notwithstanding, in the midst of greater difficulties, courageously, wisely, constantly went through with the same work and are settled in all the happy enjoyments of a potent and flourishing republic to this day.

Besides this, if we return to kingship and soon repent (as undoubtedly we shall when we begin to find the old encroachments coming on by little and little upon our consciences, which must necessarily proceed from king and bishop united inseparably in one interest<sup>41</sup>), we may be forced perhaps to fight over again all that we have fought, and spend over again all that we have spent, but are never like to attain thus far as we are now advanced to the recovery of our freedom, never to have it in possession as we now have it, never to be vouchsafed hereafter the like mercies and signal assistances from Heaven<sup>42</sup> in our cause, if by our ungrateful backsliding we make these fruitless; flying now to regal concessions from his divine condescensions and gracious answers to our once importuning prayers against the tyranny which we then groaned under; making vain and viler than dirt the blood of so many thousand faithful and valiant Englishmen who left us in this liberty, bought with their lives; losing by a strange after-game of folly all the battles we have won, together with all Scotland as to our conquest,<sup>43</sup> hereby lost, which never any of our kings could conquer, all the treasure we have spent, not that corruptible treasure only, but that far more precious of all our late miraculous deliverances; treading back again with lost labor all our happy steps in the progress of reformation, and

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. the Introduction #20 and 29.

<sup>42</sup> The anti-episcopal tracts were no less confident that Providence was guiding the events of the Puritan revolution. The answer of *The Censure of the Rota* (p. 9) was: "are you not asham'd to rob *O. Cromwell* himself, and make use of his Canting with signall Assistances from Heaven . . . : The most impious Mahometan Doctrine, that ever was vented among Christians, and such as will serve as well to justifie any prosperous villany amongst men."

<sup>43</sup> If Charles II, whom the Presbyterian majority in Scotland favored, were to be restored to the thrones of both Scotland and England, then from Milton's point of view, Cromwell's victories over the Scots at Dunbar and Worcester would be thrown away.



most pitifully depriving ourselves the instant fruition of that free government which we have so dearly purchased, a free commonwealth, not only held by wisest men in all ages the noblest, the manliest, the equallest, the justest government, the most agreeable to all due liberty and proportioned equality,<sup>44</sup> both human, civil, and Christian, most cherishing to virtue and true religion, but also (I may say it with greatest probability) plainly commended, or rather enjoined by our Saviour himself to all Christians, not without remarkable disallowance, and the brand of Gentilism upon kingship.<sup>45</sup>

God in much displeasure gave a king to the Israelites, and imputed it a sin to them that they sought one:<sup>46</sup> but Christ apparently forbids his disciples to admit of any such heathenish government. "The kings of the Gentiles," saith he, "exercise lordship over them," and they that "exercise authority upon them are called benefactors: but ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that serveth." The occasion of these his words was the ambitious desire of Zebedee's two sons to be exalted above their brethren in his kingdom, which they thought was to be ere long upon earth. That he speaks of civil government is manifest by the former part of the comparison, which infers the other part to be always in the same kind. And what government comes nearer to this precept of Christ than a free commonwealth, wherein they who are greatest, are perpetual servants and drudges to the public at their own cost and charges,<sup>47</sup> neglect their own affairs, yet are not elevated

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<sup>44</sup> Milton looks forward to his carefully graduated suffrage for the choice of his grand councillors. See Introduction #94.

<sup>45</sup> For the background of Milton's interest in the accounts in Mark x, 42-5, and Luke xxii, 25-7, of the ambitions of James and John, "Zebedee's two sons," see the Introduction #92. The point is reargued in *The Censure of the Rota*, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> This was the standard, republican interpretation of the warning to the children of Israel in I Samuel viii, 11-8, of the exactions that they would suffer if they insisted on having a king. See the Introduction #90.

<sup>47</sup> Although Milton's salary as Secretary was moderate, those of many members of Cromwell's government have been described as too princely to support Milton's statement here. It is interesting to find Pepys confiding to his diary on 19 August, 1667, that most people agreed with him,

above their brethren, live soberly in their families, walk the streets as other men, may be spoken to freely, familiarly, friendly, without adoration? Whereas a king must be adored like a demigod, with a dissolute and haughty court about him, of vast expense and luxury, masks and revels to the debauching of our prime gentry, both male and female; not in their pastimes only, but in earnest, by the loose employments of court-service, which will be then thought honorable. There will be a queen also of no less charge, in most likelihood outlandish and a papist, besides a queen-mother such already, together with both their courts and numerous train: then a royal issue, and ere long severally their sumptuous courts; to the multiplying of a servile crew, not of servants only, but of nobility<sup>48</sup> and gentry, bred up then to the hopes not of public, but of court-offices, to be stewards, chamberlains, ushers, grooms even of the close-stool;<sup>49</sup> and the lower their minds debased with court-opinions, contrary to all virtue and reformation, the haughtier will be their pride and profuseness. We may well remember this not long since at home, or need but look at present into the French court,<sup>50</sup> where enticements and preferences daily draw away and pervert the Protestant nobility.

As to the burden of expense, to our cost we shall soon know it—for any good to us deserving to be termed no better than the vast and lavish price of our subjection and their debauchery, which we are now so greedily cheapening,<sup>51</sup> and would so fain be paying most inconsiderately to a single person: who, for anything wherein the public really needs him, will have little

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“that we shall fall into a commonwealth in a few years, whether we will or no; for the charges of a monarchy is such that the kingdom cannot be brought to bear willingly, nor are things managed so well now-a-days under it, as heretofore.”

<sup>48</sup> The value of a strong nobility was one of Matthew Wren's main points in *Monarchy Asserted*. See Introduction #93.

<sup>49</sup> For appointments of a “groom of the king's stool” in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries see *Ordinances and Regulations of the . . . Royal Household*, London, 1790, pp. 18 and 156.

<sup>50</sup> Where Louis XIV had been King since 1643.

<sup>51</sup> *cheapening*: bargaining over. The terms of Charles's restoration involved possibilities of loss and gain for thousands of people.

else to do but to bestow the eating and drinking of excessive dainties, to set a pompous face upon the superficial actings of state, to pageant himself up and down in progress among the perpetual bowings and cringings of an abject people, on either side deifying and adoring him for nothing done that can deserve it. For what can he more than another man, who, even in the expression of a late court-poet, sits only like a great cipher set to no purpose before a long row of other significant figures?<sup>52</sup> Nay, it is well and happy for the people if their king be but a cipher, being oftentimes a mischief, a pest, a scourge of the nation, and, which is worse, not to be removed, not to be controlled (much less accused or brought to punishment) without the danger of a common ruin, without the shaking and almost subversion of the whole land: whereas in a free commonwealth, any governor or chief counsellor offending may be removed and punished without the least commotion.

Certainly then that people must needs be mad or strangely infatuated that build the chief hope of their common happiness or safety on a single person;<sup>53</sup> who, if he happen to be good, can do no more than another man; if to be bad, hath in his hands to do more evil without check than millions of other men. The happiness of a nation must needs be firmest and certainest in a full and free council<sup>54</sup> of their own electing, where no single person, but reason only, sways. And what madness is it for them who might manage nobly their own affairs themselves, sluggishly and weakly to devolve all on a single person; and, more like boys under age than men, to

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<sup>52</sup> Shakespeare can hardly be Milton's "court poet"; nor is it likely that he thought of the actors' hope (in the Prologue to *Henry V*) to be "the ciphers" of the King's "great accoimt, . . . since a crooked figure may Attest in little place a million."

<sup>53</sup> "One person" was a term much in vogue to refer to a monarch. Wren used it skilfully in *Monarchy Asserted* to indicate a kind of mathematical inevitability in his case for kingship as the strongest form of government because it secured the greatest concentration of power.

<sup>54</sup> *a full and free council*: the first mention of Milton's main proposal for a permanent governing body. The plan was in part a recognition of the Rump's desire to hold its power, but, as the more aristocratic form given to it in the second edition shows, it was fundamental to Milton's thought. Cf. Introduction #92.

commit all to his patronage and disposal who neither can perform what he undertakes, and yet for undertaking it, though royally paid, will not be their servant, but their lord! How unmanly must it needs be to count such a one the breath of our nostrils, to hang all our felicity on him, all our safety, our well-being; for which, if we were aught else but sluggards or babies, we need depend on none but God and our own counsels, our own active virtue and industry! "Go to the ant, thou sluggard," saith Solomon; "consider her ways, and be wise; which having no prince, ruler, or lord, provides her meat in the summer and gathers her food in the harvest:"<sup>55</sup> which evidently shows us that they who think the nation undone without a king, though they look grave or haughty, have not so much true spirit and understanding in them as a pismire: neither are these diligent creatures hence concluded to live in lawless anarchy, or that commended, but are set the examples to imprudent and ungoverned men of a frugal and self-governing democracy or commonwealth, safer and more thriving in the joint providence and counsel of many industrious equals than under the single domination of one imperious lord.

It may be well wondered that any nation styling themselves free, can suffer any man to pretend hereditary right over them as their lord, whenas, by acknowledging that right, they conclude<sup>56</sup> themselves his servants and his vassals, and so renounce their own freedom. Which how a people and their leaders especially can do, who have fought so gloriously for liberty, how they can change their noble words and actions, heretofore so becoming the majesty of a free people, into the base necessity of court flatteries and prostrations, is not only

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<sup>55</sup> The allusion is to Proverbs vi, 6. Milton is replying to the favorite Royalist argument from the royal institutions of bees and other animals, which had figured largely in Edward Simmons' *A Loyal Subjects Belief* (1643) and the *Jura Majestatis* of Griffith Williams. For the background of belief that all animal behavior was ordained of God for human edification the reader should consult George Boas, *The Happy Beast* (Baltimore, 1933), pp. 46-8.

<sup>56</sup> *conclude*: demonstrate, prove.

strange and admirable,<sup>57</sup> but lamentable to think on. That a nation should be so valorous and courageous to win their liberty in the field, and when they have won it, should be so heartless<sup>58</sup> and unwise in their counsels as not to know how to use it, value it, what to do with it, or with themselves; but after ten or twelve years' prosperous war and contestation with tyranny, basely and besottedly to run their necks again into the yoke which they have broken, and prostrate all the fruits of their victory for nought at the feet of the vanquished, besides our loss of glory and such an example as kings or tyrants never yet had the like to boast of, will be an ignominy if it befall us, that never yet befell any nation possessed of their liberty; worthy indeed themselves, whatsoever they be, to be for ever slaves, but that part of the nation which consents not with them, as I persuade me of a great number, far worthier than by their means to be brought into the same bondage.

Considering these things, so plain, so rational, I cannot but yet further admire on the other side how any man who hath the true principles of justice and religion in him, can presume or take upon him to be a king and lord over his brethren, whom he cannot but know, whether as men or Christians, to be for the most part every way equal or superior to himself: how he can display with such vanity and ostentation his regal splendor, so supereminently above other mortal men; or, being a Christian, can assume such extraordinary honor and worship to himself, while the kingdom of Christ, our common king and lord, is hid to this world, and such "gentilish"<sup>59</sup> imitation forbid in express words by himself to all his disciples. All protestants hold that Christ in his church hath left no vicegerent of his power; but himself,<sup>60</sup> without deputy, is the

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<sup>57</sup> *admirable*: wonderful, astounding.

<sup>58</sup> *heartless*: lacking in heart or courage.

<sup>59</sup> *gentilish*: cf. *gentilism* above, and note 45.

<sup>60</sup> So in *Christian Doctrine* I, xv, "the Kingly function of Christ" is defined as the government of his church "by an inward law and spiritual power." "Hence," Milton, like several other Independents, argued that "external force ought never to be employed in the administration of the kingdom of Christ, which is the church." Here he applies the doctrine

only head thereof, governing it from heaven: how then can any Christian man derive his kingship from Christ, but with worse usurpation than the pope his headship over the church, since Christ not only hath not left the least shadow of a command for any such vicegerence from him in the state, as the pope pretends for his in the church, but hath expressly declared that such regal dominion is from the gentiles, not from him, and hath strictly charged us not to imitate them therein?

I doubt not but all ingenuous and knowing men will easily agree with me that a free commonwealth without single person or house of lords<sup>61</sup> is by far the best government, if it can be had. "But we have all this while, say they, been expecting it,"<sup>62</sup> and cannot yet attain it." 'Tis true, indeed, when monarchy was dissolved, the form of a commonwealth should have forthwith been framed, and the practice thereof immediately begun, that the people might have soon been satisfied and delighted with the decent order, ease, and benefit thereof. We had been then by this time firmly rooted past fear of commotions or mutations, and now flourishing. This care of timely settling a new government instead of the old, too much neglected, hath been our mischief. Yet the cause thereof may be ascribed with most reason to the frequent disturbances, interruptions, and dissolutions, which the parliament hath had, partly from the impatient or disaffected people, partly from some ambitious leaders in the army<sup>63</sup>—much contrary, I be-

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that no church should have the aid of civil magistrates in enforcing its discipline and beliefs to discredit the Royalist contention that the spiritual kingship of Christ obliged good Christians to accept monarchy as the only human form of government with divine sanction.

<sup>61</sup> Milton is recalling the act of Parliament in May, 1649, declaring England to be a free commonwealth. The resolutions and acts abolishing kingship and the House of Lords were passed in the previous February. These decisions were reaffirmed by the Rump on 7 May, 1659.

<sup>62</sup> *expecting*: waiting for (it). The now obsolete meaning, sometimes with the note of irony that the word has here, was not uncommon.

<sup>63</sup> Can Milton have included Cromwell's personal dissolution of Parliament on 20 April, 1653? Doubtless he did include Richard Cromwell's dissolution of Parliament on 20 April, 1659, under pressure from the *ambitious leaders* of the army, Lambert, Desborough, and Fleetwood, whose notorious Wallingford House group the Parliament had tried to

lieve, to the mind and approbation of the army itself, and their other commanders, once undeceived, or in their own power.

Now is the opportunity, now the very season wherein we may obtain a free commonwealth and establish it for ever in the land, without difficulty or much delay. Writs are sent out for elections, and, which is worth observing, in the name, not of any king, but of the keepers of our liberty, to summon a free parliament;<sup>64</sup> which then only will indeed be free and deserve the true honor of that supreme title, if they preserve us a free people—which never parliament was more free to do, being now called not as heretofore, by the summons of a king, but by the voice of liberty.

And if the people, laying aside prejudice and impatience, will seriously and calmly now consider their own good, both religious and civil, their own liberty and the only means thereof, as shall be here laid before them, and will elect their knights and burgesses<sup>65</sup> able men, and according to the just and necessary qualifications (which, for aught I hear, remain yet in force unrepealed, as they were formerly decreed in parliament),<sup>66</sup> men not addicted to a single person or house of lords, the work is done; at least the foundation firmly laid of a free commonwealth, and good part also erected of the main structure. For the ground and basis of every just and free government (since men have smarted so oft for committing all to one person) is a general council of ablest men, chosen by the people to consult of public affairs from time to time for the common good. In this grand council must the sovereignty (not transferred but delegated only, and as it were deposited)

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outlaw. In October, 1659, Lambert again dissolved the reconstituted Rump.

<sup>64</sup> On 16 March, 1660, the Long Parliament, after issuing writs "in the name of the Keepers of the Liberties of England" for a free election, finally dissolved itself.

<sup>65</sup> Representatives of the counties in the House of Commons were traditionally called knights, and those from the boroughs, towns, and universities were called burgesses.

<sup>66</sup> In January and February, 1660, the Rump had passed a series of acts disabling all who could in any way be described as Royalist sympathizers from election to the new Parliament.

reside with this caution: they must have the forces by sea and land committed to them for preservation of the common peace and liberty; must raise and manage the public revenue, at least with some inspectors deputed for satisfaction of the people, how it is employed; must make or propose, as more expressly shall be said anon, civil laws, treat of commerce, peace or war with foreign nations; and, for the carrying on some particular affairs with more secrecy and expedition, must elect, as they have already out of their own number and others, a council of state.<sup>67</sup>

And, although it may seem strange at first hearing by reason that men's minds are prepossessed with the notion of successive parliaments, I affirm that the grand or general council, being well chosen, should be perpetual: for so their business is or may be, and oftentimes urgent, the opportunity of affairs gained or lost in a moment. The day of council cannot be set as the day of a festival, but must be ready always to prevent,<sup>68</sup> or answer<sup>69</sup> all occasions.<sup>70</sup> By this continuance they will become every way skilfullest, best provided of intelligence from abroad, best acquainted with the people at home, and the people with them. The ship of the commonwealth<sup>71</sup> is always under sail. They sit at the stern, and if

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<sup>67</sup> Milton's experience as Secretary for Foreign Tongues to the Council of State under Cromwell seems to have confirmed his faith in the effectiveness of such an executive body acting in concert with a larger legislature, but his recommendation of it here was doubtless influenced by the high reputation of the Venetian Senate. Several other suggestions for a new constitution which were submitted to the Rump at this time proposed two variously elected councils, the smaller of which was in most cases small enough to act executively at home and conduct foreign policy effectively. Dutch, Swiss and ancient Greek and Roman republican institutions were reflected in some of the proposals quite as clearly as they are in Milton's *Way*.

<sup>68</sup> *prevent*: anticipate, forestall.

<sup>69</sup> *answer*: handle, control.

<sup>70</sup> *occasions*: situations, emergencies.

<sup>71</sup> The idea of the ship of state may be older than Plato's elaborate parable of the mutinous crew in the *Republic* VI. An equally impressive instance is Bodin's account in the Preface to his *Commonweale* of the ship of state as so storm-tossed that the passengers have to lend a hand to the professional mariners.



they steer well, what need is there to change them, it being rather dangerous? Add to this that the grand council is both foundation and main pillar of the whole state; and to move pillars and foundations not faulty, cannot be safe for the building.

I see not, therefore, how we can be advantaged by successive and transitory parliaments; but that they are much likelier continually to unsettle rather than to settle a free government, to breed commotions, changes, novelties, and uncertainties, to bring neglect upon present affairs and opportunities, while all minds are suspense<sup>72</sup> with expectation of a new assembly, and the assembly, for a good space, taken up with the new settling of itself. After which, if they find no great work to do, they will make it by altering or repealing former acts, or making and multiplying new; that they may seem to see what their predecessors saw not and not to have assembled for nothing; till all law be lost in the multitude of clashing statutes. But if the ambition of such as think themselves injured that they also partake not of the government, and are impatient till they be chosen, cannot brook the perpetuity of others chosen before them, or if it be feared that long continuance of power may corrupt sincerest men, the known expedient is, and by some lately propounded, that annually (or if the space be longer, so much perhaps the better) the third part of senators may go out according to the precedence of their election,<sup>73</sup> and the like number be chosen in their places, to prevent the settling of too absolute a power, if it should be perpetual: and this they call "partial rotation."

But I could wish that this wheel or partial wheel<sup>74</sup> in state, if it be possible, might be avoided, as having too much affinity with the wheel of Fortune. For it appears not how this can be done without danger and mischance of putting out a great

<sup>72</sup> *suspense*: in suspense, gripped by uncertainty.

<sup>73</sup> Harrington was still pressing the principle of partial rotation which had been a main defense of popular government in his blue-print constitution in *Oceana*, four years earlier. Cf. the Introduction #93.

<sup>74</sup> A play on the idea of the wheel of rotation (Latin *rota*, a wheel) and of the wheel as the traditional symbol of the Goddess of Fortune.

number of the best and ablest, in whose stead new elections may bring in as many raw, unexperienced, and otherwise affected, to the weakening and much altering for the worse of public transactions. Neither do I think a perpetual senate, especially chosen and entrusted by the people, much in this land to be feared, where the well-affected,<sup>75</sup> either in a standing army or in a settled militia, have their arms in their own hands. Safest therefore to me it seems, and of least hazard or interruption to affairs, that none of the grand council be moved, unless by death or just conviction of some crime: for what can be expected firm or steadfast from a floating foundation? However, I forejudge not any probable expedient, any temperament that can be found in things of this nature so disputable on either side.

Yet lest this which I affirm be thought my single opinion, I shall add sufficient testimony. Kingship itself is therefore counted the more safe and durable because the king, and for the most part his council, is not changed during life. But a commonwealth is held immortal, and therein firmest, safest, and most above fortune. For the death of a king causeth oft-times many dangerous alterations, but the death now and then of a senator is not felt, the main body of them still continuing permanent in greatest and noblest commonwealths and as it were eternal. Therefore, among the Jews the supreme council of seventy, called the Sanhedrim,<sup>76</sup> founded by Moses, in Athens that of Areopagus,<sup>77</sup> in Sparta<sup>78</sup> that of the ancients, in Rome the senate,<sup>79</sup> consisted of members chosen for term of life; and by that means remained as it were still the same to generations. In Venice<sup>80</sup> they change indeed

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<sup>75</sup> *well-affected*: well-disposed, loyal.

<sup>76</sup> See Introduction #92-5.

<sup>77</sup> See Introduction #67-70.

<sup>78</sup> Under Lycurgus' constitution, as Plutarch describes it in the *Life of Lycurgus*, the council of thirty ancients, all over sixty years of age and elected for life, was the supreme authority in the government. Cf. *Of Education*, note 73.

<sup>79</sup> The Roman senate was composed of life-members who qualified for office by having held some of the highest offices in the state.

<sup>80</sup> In Venice the doge, as Bodin points out, was wisely given the sem-

often than every year some particular councils of state, as that of six, or such other: but the true senate, which upholds and sustains the government, is the whole aristocracy immovable. So in the United Provinces, the states-general,<sup>81</sup> which are indeed but a council of state deputed by the whole union, are not usually the same persons for above three or six years; but the states of every city, in whom the sovereignty hath been placed time out of mind, are a standing senate, without succession, and accounted chiefly in that regard the main prop of their liberty. And why they should be so in every well-ordered commonwealth, they who write of policy give these reasons: That to make the senate successive not only impairs the dignity and lustre of the senate, but weakens the whole commonwealth and brings it into manifest danger; while by this means the secrets of state are frequently divulged and matters of greatest consequence committed to inexperienced and novice counsellors, utterly to seek in the full and intimate knowledge of affairs past.

I know not therefore what should be peculiar in England to make successive parliaments thought safest, or convenient here more than in other nations, unless it be the fickleness which is attributed to us as we are islanders.<sup>82</sup> But good education and *acquisite*<sup>83</sup> wisdom ought to correct the *fluxible*<sup>84</sup> fault, if any such be, of our watery situation. It will

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blance rather than the reality of power. His cabinet members rotated too fast for that body to gain control of the state, which was in the hands of the Senate and the Great Council, the latter of which was perpetual in Milton's sense and consisted of the small body of Venetian nobles.

<sup>81</sup> The weakness of the Dutch States General was that no act of theirs could take effect without the consent of every one of the seventeen constituent provinces.

<sup>82</sup> In a passage which is based on Plato's warning in the *Laws* IV, 704. and which is a development of his own favorite doctrine of the influence of climate on national character, Bodin says: "As for the inhabitants vpon the Sea coast, and of great townes of traffique, all writers have observed, That they are more subtile, politike, and cunning, than those that lie farre from the sea and traffique. . . . For which cause Plato forbids them to build his Commonweale neere vnto the sea, saying, That such men are deceitfull and treacherous." (*The Commonweale* V, i, p. 564.)

<sup>83</sup> *acquisite*: acquired.

<sup>84</sup> *fluxible*: fluid, volatile, inconstant.

be objected that in those places where they had perpetual senates, they had also popular remedies against their growing too imperious: as in Athens, besides Areopagus, another senate of four or five hundred; in Sparta, the Ephori;<sup>85</sup> in Rome, the tribunes of the people.<sup>86</sup>

But the event tells us that these remedies either little availed the people, or brought them to such a licentious and unbridled democracy as in fine ruined themselves with their own excessive power. So that the main reason urged why popular assemblies are to be trusted with the people's liberty, rather than a senate of principal men, because great men will be still endeavoring to enlarge their power, but the common sort will be contented to maintain their own liberty, is by experience found false, none being more immoderate and ambitious to amplify their power than such popularities; which were seen in the people of Rome, who, at first contented to have their tribunes, at length contended with the senate that one consul, then both—soon after, that the censors and prætors also—should be created plebeian, and the whole empire put into their hands; adoring lastly those who most were adverse to the senate, till Marius,<sup>87</sup> by fulfilling their inordinate desires,

<sup>85</sup> The five Spartan Ephors were originally created as a curb on the Ancients, but their power in time became a kind of inverted aristocracy. Milton was familiar with Aristotle's criticism of them (*Politics* II, ix) as poor because of their popular origin, therefore easily tempted by bribes, and tyrannous in action.

<sup>86</sup> The Roman Tribunes of the Plebeians were originally two officers, established first in 495 B.C., with power of veto over acts of the Senate. In 457 they were increased to ten, and their power became greater in fact than that of the Consuls. The most famous Tribunes of the Plebs were the brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, whose intelligent attempts at agrarian legislation 133–23 B.C. led to the assassinations of both and to differences of opinion of which there were echoes in the discussion of Harrington's *Oceana*.

<sup>87</sup> Caius Marius (157–86 B.C.), the great plebeian general who conquered Jugurtha, annihilated the invading Gauls in northern Italy, and was seven times Consul, secured his popular power in his later years by conspiring with the most unscrupulous Roman demagogues, and in the year before his death was responsible for the massacre of many aristocrats by his soldiers.

quite lost them all the power for which they had so long been striving, and left them under the tyranny of Sylla.<sup>88</sup>

The balance therefore must be exactly so set as to preserve and keep up due authority on either side, as well in the senate as in the people. And this annual rotation of a senate to consist of three hundred, as is lately propounded, requires also another popular assembly upward of a thousand,<sup>89</sup> with an answerable rotation. Which, besides that it will be liable to all those inconveniences found in the foresaid remedies, cannot but be troublesome and chargeable, both in their motion<sup>90</sup> and their session, to the whole land, unwieldy with their own bulk, unable in so great a number to mature their consultations as they ought, if any be allotted them, and that they meet not from so many parts remote to sit a whole year lieger<sup>91</sup> in one place, only now and then to hold up a forest of fingers, or to convey each man his bean or ballot into the box, without reason shown or common deliberation; incontinent<sup>92</sup> of secrets, if any be imparted to them, emulous and always jarring with the other senate. The much better way doubtless will be, in this wavering condition of our affairs, to defer the changing or circumscribing of our senate, more than may be done with ease, till the commonwealth be thoroughly settled in peace and safety, and they themselves give us the occasion.

Military men hold it dangerous to change the form of battle in view of an enemy: neither did the people of Rome bandy with their senate while any of the Tarquins<sup>93</sup> lived, the enemies of their liberty; nor sought, by creating tribunes, to defend themselves against the fear of their patricians, till (sixteen years

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<sup>88</sup> L. Cornelius Sulla (138–78 B.C.), who served against Jugurtha under Marius and had a brilliant military career, after crushing Marius' party in 82, mercilessly revenged his massacre of the patricians, and became dictator.

<sup>89</sup> Miss Lockwood quotes the Commons Journal of 8 September, 1659, as recording a plan of this kind on the agenda of the day.

<sup>90</sup> *motion*: travel back and forth from the meetings of Parliament to their homes.

<sup>91</sup> *lieger*: resident.

<sup>92</sup> *incontinent*: unwithholding, *i.e.*, indiscreet.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *Tenure*, note 63.

after the expulsion of their kings, and in full security of their state) they had or thought they had just cause given them by the senate. Another way will be to well qualify and refine elections,<sup>94</sup> not committing all to the noise and shouting of a rude multitude, but permitting only those of them who are rightly qualified to nominate as many as they will; and out of that number others of a better breeding, to choose a less number more judiciously, till after a third or fourth sifting and refining of exactest choice, they only be left chosen who are the due number and seem by most voices the worthiest.

To make the people fittest to choose, and the chosen fittest to govern, will be to mend our corrupt and faulty education,<sup>95</sup> to teach the people faith, not without virtue, temperance, modesty, sobriety, parsimony, justice; not to admire wealth or honor; to hate turbulence and ambition; to place every one his private welfare and happiness in the public peace, liberty, and safety. They shall not then need to be much mistrustful of their chosen patriots in the grand council, who will be then rightly called the true keepers of our liberty, though the most of their business will be in foreign affairs. But to prevent all mistrust, the people then will have their several ordinary assemblies (which will henceforth quite annihilate the odious power and name of committees<sup>96</sup>) in the chief towns of every county—without the trouble, charge, or time lost of summoning and assembling from far in so great a number, and so long residing from their own houses, or removing of their families—to do as much at home in their several

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<sup>94</sup> Mr. Don Wolfe has an effective graph of Milton's election scheme in *Milton in the Puritan Revolution*, p. 301.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Milton's plans for educational reform in *Of Education* and their bearing upon the character of public men.

<sup>96</sup> As early as 1647 local committees were established to forward the Parliamentary cause. Though they "had no definite authority to govern the Church" (S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War*, III, 202) and interfered only moderately in religious affairs, they were active against Royalist conspiracies and under the Protectorate, when their presidents were the notorious eleven major generals who enforced the rule of Cromwell's Council of State throughout England, they were unpopular. (Cf. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, III, 341.)

shires, entire or subdivided, toward the securing of their liberty, as a numerous assembly of them all formed and convened on purpose with the wariest rotation. Whereof I shall speak more ere the end of this discourse, for it may be referred to time, so we be still going on by degrees to perfection. The people well weighing and performing these things, I suppose would have no cause to fear, though the parliament, abolishing that name as originally signifying but the "parley" of our lords and commons with their Norman king<sup>97</sup> when he pleased to call them,<sup>98</sup> should, with certain limitations of their power, sit perpetual, if their ends be faithful and for a free commonwealth, under the name of a grand or general council.

Till this be done, I am in doubt whether our state will be ever certainly and thoroughly settled; never likely till then to see an end of our troubles and continual changes, or at least never the true settlement and assurance of our liberty. The grand council being thus firmly constituted to perpetuity, and still, upon the death or default of any member, supplied and kept in full number, there can be no cause alleged why peace, justice, plentiful trade, and all prosperity should not thereupon ensue throughout the whole land; with as much assurance as can be of human things that they shall so continue (if God favor us, and our wilful sins provoke him not) even to the coming of our true and rightful and only to be expected King, only worthy as he is our only Saviour, the Messiah, the Christ,<sup>99</sup> the only heir of his eternal Father, the only by him anointed and ordained since the work of our redemption finished, universal Lord of all mankind.

The way propounded is plain, easy, and open before us, without intricacies, without the introducement of new or

<sup>97</sup> Through the Army Debates at Putney and Whitehall in 1647-1649 runs an exaggerated misconception of the Norman Conquest as having ended many of the popular rights of the English under their Saxon kings. "In Alfred's time," said the irrepressible Commissary Nicholas Cowling, "the Commons had all the power." See Woodhouse, *Puritanism and Liberty*, p. 120.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *Tenure*, note 42.

<sup>99</sup> Until the Day of Judgment, perhaps, or, perhaps until the full establishment of Christ's truth on earth. Cf. *Areopagitica*, note 243.

obsolete forms or terms, or exotic models—ideas that would effect nothing but with a number of new injunctions to manacle<sup>100</sup> the native liberty of mankind, turning all virtue into prescription, servitude, and necessity, to the great impairing and frustrating of Christian liberty.<sup>101</sup> I say again, this way lies free and smooth before us, is not tangled with inconveniences, invents no new incumbrances, requires no perilous, no injurious alteration or circumscription of men's lands and properties; secure, that in this commonwealth, temporal and spiritual lords<sup>102</sup> removed, no man or number of men can attain to such wealth or vast possession as will need the hedge of an agrarian law (never successful,<sup>103</sup> but the cause rather of sedition, save only where it began seasonably with first possession) to confine them from endangering our public liberty. To conclude, it can have no considerable objection made against it that it is not practicable; lest it be said hereafter that we gave up our liberty for want of a ready way or distinct form proposed of a free commonwealth. And this facility we shall have above our next neighboring commonwealth (if we can keep us from the fond conceit of something like a duke of Venice,<sup>104</sup> put lately into many men's heads by some one or other subtly driving on under that notion his own ambitious ends to lurch a crown) that our liberty shall not be hampered or hovered over by any engagement to such a potent family as the house of Nassau,<sup>105</sup> of whom to stand in perpetual doubt and suspicion,

<sup>100</sup> Cf. *Tenure*, note 37.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. *The Christian Doctrine* I, xxvii, "Of the Gospel and Christian Liberty."

<sup>102</sup> *spiritual lords*: the bishops, who still sit in the House of Lords. Cf. note 61 above.

<sup>103</sup> The classic example of the failure of attempts at agrarian legislation was that in Rome in 133–23 B.C. (Cf. note 86 above.) Perhaps Milton also thought of Plato's disapproval of agrarian laws. (Cf. *Laws*, 684c.) Milton is replying here to Harrington's proposal of agrarian restrictions in *Oceana*. Cf. Introduction #93.

<sup>104</sup> Probably a suggestion for returning Richard Cromwell to nominal power with a status like that of the Doge of Venice. Cf. note 80 above.

<sup>105</sup> The heirs of William, Prince of Orange, of the house of Nassau, inherited the power which he established for himself as Stadtholder in the republic which was established by the provinces of the Netherlands in 1579.



but we shall live the clearest and absolutest free nation in the world.

On the contrary, if there be a king, which the inconsiderate multitude are now so mad upon, mark how far short we are like to come of all those happinesses which in a free state we shall immediately be possessed of. First, the grand council, which, as I showed before, should sit perpetually (unless their leisure give them now and then some intermissions or vacations, easily manageable by the council of state left sitting), shall be called, by the king's good will and utmost endeavor, as seldom as may be. For it is only the king's right, he will say, to call a parliament; and this he will do most commonly about his own affairs rather than the kingdom's, as will appear plainly so soon as they are called. For what will their business then be, and the chief expense of their time, but an endless tugging between petition of right and royal prerogative,<sup>106</sup> especially about the negative voice,<sup>107</sup> militia, or subsidies, demanded and oftentimes extorted without reasonable cause appearing to the commons, who are the only true representatives of the people and their liberty, but will be then mingled with a court-faction. Besides which, within their own walls, the sincere part of them who stand faithful to the people will again have to deal with two troublesome counter-working adversaries from without, mere creatures of the king, spiritual, and the greater part, as is likeliest, of temporal lords, nothing concerned with the people's liberty.<sup>108</sup>

If these prevail not in what they please, though never so much against the people's interest, the parliament shall be soon dissolved, or sit and do nothing; not suffered to remedy the least grievance, or enact aught advantageous to the people. Next, the council of state shall not be chosen by the parliament, but by the king, still his own creatures, courtiers and favorites,

<sup>106</sup> Milton is looking backward to the beginning of serious parliamentary resistance to Charles I's assertion of royal prerogative when, in 1628, the king was obliged to give his consent to the Petition of Right.

<sup>107</sup> Charles II and James II continued to assert the right of the crown to veto bills passed by Parliament.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. note 49 above.

who will be sure in all their counsels to set their master's grandeur and absolute power, in what they are able, far above the people's liberty. I deny not but that there may be such a king who may regard the common good before his own, may have no vicious favorite, may hearken only to the wisest and incorruptest of his parliament: but this rarely happens in a monarchy not elective, and it behoves not a wise nation to commit the sum of their well-being, the whole state of their safety to fortune. What need they? and how absurd would it be, whenas they themselves, to whom his chief virtue will be but to hearken, may with much better management and dispatch, with much more commendation of their own worth and magnanimity, govern without a master? Can the folly be paralleled, to adore and be the slaves of a single person for doing that which it is ten thousand to one whether he can or will do, and we without him might do more easily, more effectually, more laudably ourselves? Shall we never grow old enough to be wise to make seasonable use of gravest authorities, experiences, examples? Is it such an unspeakable joy to serve, such felicity to wear a yoke, to clink our shackles locked on by pretended law of subjection, more intolerable and hopeless to be ever shaken off than those which are knocked on by illegal injury and violence?

Aristotle,<sup>109</sup> our chief instructor in the universities (lest this doctrine be thought sectarian, as the royalist would have it thought), tells us in the third of his *Politics* that certain men at first, for the matchless excellence of their virtue above others, or some great public benefit, were created kings by the people, in small cities and territories, and in the scarcity of others to be found like them: but when they abused their power and governments grew larger and the number of prudent men increased, that then the people, soon deposing their tyrants, betook them, in all civilest places, to the form of a free commonwealth. And why should we thus disparage and prejudicate our own nation as to fear a scarcity of able and worthy men united in counsel to govern us, if we will but use

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. *Tenure*, note 39.

diligence and impartiality to find them out and choose them, rather yoking ourselves to a single person, the natural adversary and oppressor of liberty; though good, yet far easier corruptible by the excess of his singular power and exaltation, or at best, not comparably sufficient to bear the weight of government, nor equally disposed to make us happy in the enjoyment of our liberty under him?

But admit that monarchy of itself may be convenient to some nations,<sup>110</sup> yet to us who have thrown it out, received back again, it cannot but prove pernicious. For kings to come, never forgetting their former ejection, will be sure to fortify and arm themselves sufficiently for the future against all such attempts hereafter from the people; who shall be then so narrowly watched and kept so low<sup>111</sup> that though they would never so fain, and at the same rate of their blood and treasure, they never shall be able to regain what they now have purchased and may enjoy, or to free themselves from any yoke imposed upon them. Nor will they dare to go about it—utterly disheartened for the future, if these their highest attempts prove unsuccessful—which will be the triumph of all tyrants hereafter over any people that shall resist oppression, And their song will then be, to others, “How sped the rebellious English?”—to our posterity, “How sped the rebels, your fathers?”

This is not my conjecture, but drawn from God’s known denouncement against the gentilizing Israelites, who, though they were governed in a commonwealth of God’s own ordaining, he only their king, they his peculiar people, yet affecting rather to resemble heathen, but pretending the misgovernment of Samuel’s sons<sup>112</sup> (no more a reason to dislike their commonwealth than the violence of Eli’s sons<sup>113</sup> was imputable

<sup>110</sup> In the *Commonplace Book* Milton had recorded his interest in the theory that various forms of government suit various nations. (C. E. XVIII, 163.)

<sup>111</sup> Again in the *Commonplace Book* (C. E. XVIII, 176) Milton quotes Guicciardini’s *History of Italy* on the tendency of tyrants to suppress popular military activity. Cf. *Tenure*, note 45.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *Tenure*, note 62, and Introduction #90.

<sup>113</sup> I Samuel ii, 12–7.

to that priesthood or religion) clamored for a king. They had their longing, but with this testimony of God's wrath: "Ye shall cry out in that day, because of your king whom ye shall have chosen, and the Lord will not hear you in that day."<sup>114</sup> Us if he shall hear now, how much less will he hear when we cry hereafter, who once delivered by him from a king, and not without wondrous acts of his providence, insensible and unworthy of those high mercies, are returning precipitantly, if he withhold us not, back to the captivity from whence he freed us!

Yet neither shall we obtain or buy at an easy rate this new gilded yoke which thus transports us. A new royal revenue must be found, a new episcopal, for those are individual:<sup>115</sup> both which being wholly dissipated, or brought by private persons, or assigned for service done (and especially to the army), cannot be recovered without a general detriment and confusion to men's estates, or a heavy imposition on all men's purses—benefit to none but to the worst and ignoblest sort of men whose hope is to be either the ministers of court riot and excess, or the gainers by it. But not to speak more of losses and extraordinary levies on our estates, what will then be the revenges and offences remembered and returned, not only by the chief person, but by all his adherents; accounts and reparations that will be required, suits, indictments, inquiries, discoveries, complaints, informations, who knows against whom or how many, though perhaps neutrals,<sup>116</sup> if not to utmost infliction, yet to imprisonment, fines, banishment, or molestation?—if not these, yet disfavor, discountenance, disregard, and contempt on all but the known royalist, or whom he favors, will be plenteous.

Nor let the new royalized presbyterians<sup>117</sup> persuade them-

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<sup>114</sup> I Samuel viii, 18.

<sup>115</sup> *individual*: privately owned. As a matter of fact, no compensation was paid to the purchasers of the alienated lands of the bishops and of the nobles who had sided with Charles when they were restored by act of Parliament to their owners soon after Charles II's restoration.

<sup>116</sup> *neutrals*: persons siding with neither faction.

<sup>117</sup> The Royalist inclinations of the Presbyterians began before the trial of Charles I. Cf. *Tenure*, note 7.

selves that their old doings, though now recanted, will be forgotten, whatever conditions be contrived or trusted on. Will they not believe this, nor remember the pacification; how it was kept to the Scots;<sup>118</sup> how other solemn promises many a time to us? Let them but now read the diabolical forerunning libels,<sup>119</sup> the faces, the gestures that now appear foremost and briskest in all public places, as the harbingers of those that are in expectation to reign over us. Let them but hear the insolencies, the menaces, the insultings of our newly animated common enemies crept lately out of their holes, their hell I might say by the language of their infernal pamphlets, the spew of every drunkard, every ribald; nameless, yet not for want of licence, but for very shame of their own vile persons, not daring to name themselves, while they traduce others by name; and give us to foresee that they intend to second their wicked words, if ever they have power, with more wicked deeds.

Let our zealous backsliders forethink now with themselves how their necks yoked with these tigers of Bacchus<sup>120</sup>—these new fanatics of not the preaching-, but the sweating-tub,<sup>121</sup> inspired with nothing holier than the venereal pox—can draw one way under monarchy to the establishing of church discipline with these new-disgorged atheisms. Yet shall they not have the honor to yoke with these, but shall be yoked under

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<sup>118</sup> The Pacification or Engagement was a treaty signed with the Scots by Charles at Carisbrooke Castle immediately after he had finally destroyed all faith in himself among the English army leaders by his flight there. On 26 December, 1647, he undertook to confirm the Covenant, to protect all who had taken it, to suppress all "heresies" and maintain the Presbyterian establishment for at least three years. On their side, the Scots promised, if necessary, to invade England on Charles's behalf.

<sup>119</sup> In Appendix A to his edition of the *Way* Mr. Clark reprints some choice examples of the "libels."

<sup>120</sup> With the god of wine, says Natale Conti (*Mythologiae* V, xiii) lynxes, tigers, and panthers are wont to go. Here, of course, *tigers* is used in a double sense.

<sup>121</sup> The fanatic Fifth Monarchy men had been preaching for more than a decade from tubs in the streets. The sweating tubs that Milton recommends for the preachers of a return to monarchy were used in treating venereal disease.

them. These shall plough on their backs. And do they among them who are so forward to bring in the single person, think to be by him trusted or long regarded? So trusted they shall be, and so regarded, as by kings are wont reconciled enemies; neglected, and soon after discarded, if not prosecuted for old traitors; the first inciters, beginners, and more than to the third part actors,<sup>122</sup> of all that followed.

It will be found also that there must be then as necessarily as now (for the contrary part will be still feared), a standing army, which for certain shall not be this, but of the fiercest cavaliers, of no less expense, and perhaps again under Rupert.<sup>123</sup> But let this army<sup>124</sup> be sure they shall be soon disbanded (and likeliest without arrear or pay) and being disbanded, not be sure but they may as soon be questioned for being in arms against their king. The same let them fear who have contributed money, which will amount to no small number that must then take their turn to be made delinquents<sup>125</sup> and compounders. They who past reason and recovery are devoted to kingship perhaps will answer that a greater part by far of the nation will have it so: the rest therefore must yield.

Not so much to convince these, which I little hope, as to confirm them who yield not, I reply that this greatest part have both in reason and the trial of just battle lost the right of their election what the government shall be. Of them who have not lost that right, whether they for kingship be the greater number, who can certainly determine? Suppose they be, yet of freedom they partake all alike, one main end

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<sup>122</sup> Cf. Introduction #87.

<sup>123</sup> Prince Rupert (1619-82), the son of Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, and Charles I's nephew, joined his uncle early in the Civil War, led brilliant cavalry charges at Edgehill and the first Battle of Newbury, forced the defeat of Marston Moor on his superiors by insisting on fighting against heavy odds, was commander-in-chief of the royal army when it was defeated at Naseby, and later commanded Charles's fleet.

<sup>124</sup> *this army*: the veterans who had fought with Cromwell and were at the moment still strongly republican in outlook.

<sup>125</sup> Royalist land-owners in large numbers had been declared delinquents by the Long Parliament and their estates seized and sold.

of government; which if the greater part value not, but will degenerately forego, is it just or reasonable that most voices against the main end of government should enslave the less number that would be free?<sup>126</sup> More just it is, doubtless, if it come to force, that a less number compel a greater to retain (which can be no wrong to them) their liberty, than that a greater number, for the pleasure of their baseness, compel a less most injuriously to be their fellow-slaves. They who seek nothing but their own just liberty, have always right to win it and to keep it, whenever they have power, be the voices never so numerous that oppose it. And how much we above others are concerned to defend it from kingship, and from them who in pursuance thereof so perniciously would betray us and themselves to most certain misery and thralldom, will be needless to repeat.

Having thus far shown with what ease we may now obtain a free commonwealth, and by it, with as much ease, all the freedom, peace, justice, plenty, that we can desire; on the other side, the difficulties, troubles, uncertainties, nay, rather impossibilities, to enjoy these things constantly under a monarch; I will now proceed to show more particularly wherein our freedom and flourishing condition will be more ample and secure to us under a free commonwealth than under kingship.

The whole freedom of man consists either in spiritual or civil liberty.<sup>127</sup> As for spiritual, who can be at rest, who can enjoy anything in this world with contentment who hath not liberty to serve God and to save his own soul according to the best light which God hath planted in him to that purpose, by the reading of his revealed will and the guidance of his Holy Spirit?<sup>128</sup> That this is best pleasing to God, and

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<sup>126</sup> As he wrote this paragraph Milton may have thought of Plato's "greatest principle of all" (in the *Laws* III, 690): "that the wise should lead and command, and the ignorant follow and obey." His conception of the leadership of Parliament in the Puritan Revolution had always involved that principle.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Introduction #52.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Milton's assertion of the right of individual interpretation of

that the whole protestant church allows no supreme judge or rule in matters of religion but the Scriptures—and these to be interpreted by the Scriptures themselves, which necessarily infers liberty of conscience—I have heretofore proved at large in another treatise;<sup>129</sup> and might yet further, by the public declarations, confessions, and admonitions of whole churches and states,<sup>130</sup> obvious in all history since the reformation.

This liberty of conscience, which above all other things ought to be to all men dearest and most precious, no government more inclinable not to favor only, but to protect, than a free commonwealth, as being most magnanimous, most fearless, and confident of its own fair proceedings. Whereas kingship, though looking big, yet indeed most pusillanimous, full of fears, full of jealousies, startled at every umbrage,<sup>131</sup> as it hath been observed of old to have ever suspected most and mistrusted them who were in most esteem for virtue and generosity of mind,<sup>132</sup> so it is now known to have most in doubt and suspicion them who are most reputed to be religious. Queen Elizabeth, though herself accounted so good a protestant, so moderate, so confident of her subjects' love, would never give way so much as to presbyterian reformation in this land, though once and again besought, as Camden relates;<sup>133</sup> but imprisoned and persecuted the very proposers the Bible by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and of his belief that "without this liberty there is neither religion nor gospel—force alone prevails—by which it is disgraceful for the Christian religion to be supported." (Preface to *Christian Doctrine*.)

<sup>129</sup> The *Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Cases*.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. the Westminster Confession of 1647: "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly."

<sup>131</sup> *umbrage*: shadow.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. *Tenure*, note 4.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. the appeal to Camden in *Church Government* I, vii (note 102). Here Milton refers to the *History of Elizabeth*: "The Reform'd Religion being now Establish'd by Parliament, the Queen's chief Care and Concern was how to guard and protect it from the several Attacks and Practices of . . . its profess'd Enemies. . . . And as she would admit of no innovations herein, so she studied to square her own Life and Actions by so even a balance, as to preserve the character of one not given to change."



thereof, alleging it as her mind and maxim unalterable, that such reformation would diminish regal authority.

What liberty of conscience can we then expect of others, far worse principled from the cradle, trained up and governed by popish and Spanish counsels,<sup>184</sup> and on such depending hitherto for subsistence? Especially what can this last parliament expect, who having revived lately and published the covenant, have re-engaged themselves never to readmit episcopacy? Which no son of Charles returning but will most certainly bring back with him, if he regard the last and strictest charge of his father, "to persevere in, not the doctrine only, but government of the church of England, not to neglect the speedy and effectual suppressing of errors and schisms";<sup>185</sup> among which he accounted presbytery one of the chief.

Or if, notwithstanding that charge of his father, he submit to the covenant, how will he keep faith to us with disobedience to him, or regard that faith given, which must be founded on the breach of that last and solemnest paternal charge, and the reluctance, I may say the antipathy, which is in all kings against presbyterian and independent discipline? For they hear the gospel speaking much of liberty—a word which monarchy and her bishops both fear and hate, but a free commonwealth both favors and promotes, and not the word only, but the thing itself. But let our governors

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<sup>184</sup> Milton thought of Charles II's upbringing by a French, Catholic mother, and of his recent attachment to the Spaniards, on whose part he had fought in Flanders when Cromwell's expeditionary force helped Turenne defeat the Spaniards on 4 June, 1658, at the Battle of the Dunes.

<sup>185</sup> Similar advice, as Masson notices (*Life of Milton* IV, 35), is given to the Prince of Wales by Charles I in *Eikon Basilike* (assuming that the claim of his authorship of the work is justified). It assumes the Prince's devotion to "the Church of England," and gives advice which must have seemed threatening to Milton: "Let nothing seem little or despicable to you in matters which concern religion and the Church's peace, so as to neglect a speedy reforming and effectual suppressing errors and schisms which seem at first as a hand-breadth, yet by seditious spirits as by strong winds, are soon made to darken and cover the whole heaven." (*Eikon Basilike. The Pourtraicture of his Sacred Majestie in his Solitudes and Sufferings*. A Reprint of the Edition of 1649, London, 1880, p. 196.)

beware in time lest their hard measure to liberty of conscience be found the rock whereon they shipwreck themselves (as others have now done before them in the course wherein God was directing their steerage to a free commonwealth), and the abandoning of all those whom they call sectaries (for the detected falsehood and ambition of some) be a wilful rejection of their own chief strength and interest in the freedom of all protestant religion, under what abusive name soever calumniated.

The other part of our freedom consists in the civil rights and advancements of every person according to his merit: the enjoyment of those never more certain, and the access to these never more open, than in a free commonwealth.<sup>136</sup> Both which, in my opinion, may be best and soonest obtained, if every county in the land were made a kind of subordinate commonalty or commonwealth, and one chief town or more, according as the shire is in circuit, made cities, if they be not so called already; where the nobility and chief gentry, from a proportionable compass of territory annexed to each city, may build houses or palaces befitting their quality, may bear part in the government, make their own judicial laws, or use these that are, and execute them by their own elected judicatures and judges without appeal, in all things of civil government between man and man. So they shall have justice in their own hands, law executed fully and finally in their own counties and precincts, long wished and spoken of, but never yet obtained. They shall have none then to blame but themselves, if it be not well administered, and fewer laws to expect or fear from the supreme authority. Or to those that shall be made, of any great concernment to public liberty, they may without much trouble, in these commonalties, or in more general assemblies called to their cities from the whole territory on such occasion, declare and publish their assent or dissent by deputies, within a time limited, sent to the grand council. Yet so as this their judgment declared shall submit to the greater number of other counties or commonalties,

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Introduction #95.

and not avail them to any exemption of themselves, or refusal of agreement with the rest, as it may in any of the United Provinces, being sovereign within itself, oftentimes to the great disadvantage of that union.<sup>137</sup>

In these employments they may, much better than they do now, exercise and fit themselves till their lot fall to be chosen into the grand council, according as their worth and merit shall be taken notice of by the people. As for controversies that shall happen between men of several counties, they may repair, as they do now, to the capital city, or any other more commodious, indifferent place, and equal judges. And this I find to have been practised in the old Athenian commonwealth, reputed the first and ancientest place of civility in all Greece; that they had in their several cities a peculiar, in Athens a common, government; and their right, as it befell them, to the administration of both.<sup>138</sup>

They should have here also schools and academies at their own choice, wherein their children may be bred up in their own sight to all learning and noble education—not in grammar only, but in all liberal arts and exercises. This would soon spread much more knowledge and civility, yea, religion, through all parts of the land, by communicating the natural heat of government and culture more distributively to all extreme parts which now lie numb and neglected; would soon make the whole nation more industrious, more ingenuous at home, more potent, more honorable abroad. To this a free commonwealth will easily assent. Nay, the parliament hath had already some such thing in design, for of all governments a commonwealth aims most to make the people flourishing, virtuous, noble, and high-spirited. Monarchs will never per-

<sup>137</sup>A practical result of the lack of centralized power in Holland had recently been the failure of some of the United Provinces to give their admirals, Martin Tromp and de Ruyter, the support necessary to secure victory over the English in the naval war in 1652-3.

<sup>138</sup>In 510 B.C. Cleisthenes ended civil strife in Attica by decentralizing government and stopping the control over the agricultural districts and smaller towns which the rich oligarchs of Athens had exercised. Ten new tribes were established, and the demes or towns were given the right to elect their demarchs or mayors locally.

mit, whose aim is to make the people wealthy indeed perhaps, and well fleeced for their own shearing<sup>139</sup> and the supply of regal prodigality, but otherwise softest, basest, vicieusest, servilest, easiest to be kept under. And not only in fleece, but in mind also sheepishest, and will have all the benches of judicature annexed to the throne, as a gift of royal grace that we have justice done us; whenas nothing can be more essential to the freedom of a people than to have the administration of justice and all public ornaments in their own election and within their own bounds, without long travelling or depending on remote places to obtain their right, or any civil accomplishment, so it be not supreme, but subordinate to the general power and union of the whole republic.

In which happy firmness, as in the particular above-mentioned, we shall also far exceed the United Provinces, by having, not as they (to the retarding and distracting oft-times of their counsels or urgentest occasions), many sovereignties united in one commonwealth, but many commonwealths under one united and entrusted sovereignty. And when we have our forces by sea and land, either of a faithful army or a settled militia, in our own hands to the firm establishing of a free commonwealth, public accounts under our own inspection, general laws and taxes (with their causes) in our own domestic suffrages, judicial laws, offices, and ornaments at home in our own ordering and administration, all distinction of lords and commoners that may any way divide or sever the public interest, removed—what can a perpetual senate have then wherein to grow corrupt, wherein to encroach upon us, or usurp? Or if they do, wherein to be formidable? Yet if all this avail not to remove the fear or envy of a perpetual sitting, it may be easily provided to change a third part of them yearly, or every two or three years, as was above mentioned: or that it be at those times in the people's choice,

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<sup>139</sup> The figure goes back to Plato's description in the *Republic* I, 343, of true kings as never thinking of their subjects as sheep, but rather working for their advantage day and night.

whether they will change them, or renew their power, as they shall find cause.

I have no more to say at present. Few words will save us, well considered; few and easy things, now seasonably done. But if the people be so affected as to prostitute religion and liberty to the vain and groundless apprehension that nothing but kingship can restore trade—not remembering the frequent plagues and pestilences that then wasted this city, such as through God's mercy we never have felt since,<sup>140</sup> and that trade flourishes nowhere more than in the free commonwealths of Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries, before their eyes at this day (yet if trade be grown so craving and importunate through the profuse living of tradesmen that nothing can support it but the luxurious expenses of a nation upon trifles or superfluities; so as if the people generally should betake themselves to frugality, it might prove a dangerous matter, lest tradesmen should mutiny for want of trading, and that therefore we must forego and set to sale religion, liberty, honor, safety, all concerns divine or human, to keep up trading)—if, lastly, after all this light among us, the same reason shall pass for current to put our necks again under kingship, as was made use of by the Jews to return back to Egypt<sup>141</sup> and to the worship of their idol queen, because they falsely imagined that they then lived in more plenty and prosperity, our condition is not sound, but rotten, both in religion and all civil prudence; and will bring us soon, the way we are marching, to those calamities which attend always and unavoidably on luxury, all national judgments under foreign or domestic slavery. So far we shall be from mending our condition by monarchizing our government, whatever new conceit now possesses us.

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<sup>140</sup> Since 1625 there had been no great outbreak of the plague which had been dreaded with good cause in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I, and was often regarded as a divine judgment. In 1665 Milton lived through its last and perhaps its worst epidemic outbreak in London.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. the story of the desire of the Hebrews in the desert to return to "the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick" of Egypt. (Num. xi, 5.)

However, with all hazard I have ventured what I thought my duty to speak in season, and to forewarn my country in time, wherein I doubt not but there be many wise men in all places and degrees, but am sorry the effects of wisdom are so little seen among us. Many circumstances and particulars I could have added in those things whereof I have spoken; but a few main matters now put speedily in execution, will suffice to recover us and set all right. And there will want at no time who are good at circumstances, but men who set their minds on main matters and sufficiently urge them, in these most difficult times I find not many.

What I have spoken is the language of that which is not called amiss "The good old Cause."<sup>142</sup> If it seem strange to any, it will not seem more strange, I hope, than convincing to backsliders. Thus much I should perhaps have said, though I were sure I should have spoken only to trees and stones, and had none to cry to, but with the prophet, "O earth, earth, earth!" to tell the very soil itself what her perverse inhabitants are deaf to.<sup>143</sup> Nay, though what I have spoke should happen (which thou suffer not, who didst create mankind free! nor thou next, who didst redeem us from being servants of men!)<sup>144</sup> to be the last words of our expiring liberty. But I trust I shall have spoken persuasion to abundance of sensible and ingenuous men; to some, perhaps, whom God may raise of these stones to become children of reviving liberty,<sup>145</sup> and may reclaim, though they seem now choosing them a captain back for Egypt, to bethink themselves a little and consider whither they are rushing; to exhort this torrent also of the people not to be so impetuous, but to keep their due channel; and at length recovering and uniting their better resolutions,

<sup>142</sup> Milton glances at the insult that was being put upon the traditional name of his cause among its supporters by pamphlets like *A Coffin for the Good Old Cause, Or, A Sober Word by way of Caution to the Parliament and Army*, etc. . . . By an Affectionate Friend to it and them, which was anonymously published in 1660.

<sup>143</sup> Jeremiah xxii, 29.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Introduction #109.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. the prophet's vision in Ezekiel xxxvii of the dry bones that come gradually to life as he prophesies to them at God's command.

now that they see already how open and unbounded the insolence and rage is of our common enemies, to stay these ruinous proceedings, justly and timely fearing to what a precipice of destruction the deluge of this epidemic madness would hurry us, through the general defection of a misguided and abused multitude.

# THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.\*

## BOOK I.

### CHAPTER I.

OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, AND THE NUMBER OF ITS DIVISIONS.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE is that DIVINE REVELATION disclosed to all ages by CHRIST (though he was not known under that name in the beginning) concerning the nature and worship of the Deity, for the promotion of the glory of God, and the salvation of mankind.

It is not unreasonable to assume that Christians believe in the Scriptures whence this doctrine is derived—but the authority of those Scriptures will be examined in the proper place.

CHRIST. Matt. xi. 27. *neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* John i. 4. *in him was life, and the life was the light of men.* v. 9. *that was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* 1 Pet. iii. 19. *by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*

Under the definition of CHRIST are also comprehended Moses and the Prophets, who were his forerunners, and the Apostles whom he sent. Gal. iii. 24. *the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* Heb. xiii. 8. *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* Col. ii. 17. *which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ.* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. *who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did*

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\* The translation is exactly reproduced from Bishop Sumner's original rendering as printed in the first edition in 1825.



*signify. Rom. i. 1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ: in which manner he begins nearly all the rest of his epistles. 1 Cor. iv. 1. let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ.*

*DIVINE REVELATION. Isai. li. 4. a law shall proceed from me. Matt. xvi. 17. flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. John vi. 46. they shall be all taught of God. ix. 29. we know that God spake unto Moses. Gal. i. 11, 12. the gospel which was preached of me is not after man; for I neither received it of man. 1 Thess. iv. 9. ye yourselves are taught of God.*

This doctrine, therefore, is to be obtained, not from the schools of the philosophers, nor from the laws of man, but from the Holy Scriptures alone, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. *2 Tim. i. 14. that good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. Col. ii. 8. lest any man spoil you through philosophy. Dan. iii. 16. we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. Acts iv. 19. whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*

In this treatise then no novelties of doctrine are taught; but, for the sake of assisting the memory, what is dispersed throughout the different parts of the Holy Scriptures is conveniently reduced into one compact body as it were, and digested under certain heads. This method might be easily defended on the ground of Christian prudence, but it seems better to rest its authority on the divine command; *Matt. xiii. 52. every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man which is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.* So also the Apostle says, *2 Tim. i. 13. hold fast the form*—which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have determined to adopt as the rule of his own conduct for teaching the heads of Christian doctrine in methodical arrangement: *vi. 1-3. of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement; and this will we do, if God permit.* This usage of the Christians was admirably suited

for Catechumens<sup>1</sup> when first professing their faith in the Church. Allusion is made to the same system in Rom. vi. 17. *ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.* In this passage the Greek word τυπός, as well as ὑποτύπωσις 2 Tim. i. 13. seems to signify either that part of the evangelical Scriptures which were then written (as in Rom. ii. 20. μόρφωσις, *the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law*, signified the law itself) or some systematic course of instruction derived from them or from the whole doctrine of the gospel. Acts xx. 27. *I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*—which must mean some entire body of doctrine, formed according to a certain plan, though probably not of great extent, since the whole was gone through, and perhaps even repeated several times during St. Paul's stay at Ephesus, which was about the space of three years.

Christian doctrine is comprehended under two divisions,—FAITH, OR THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD,—and LOVE, OR THE WORSHIP OF GOD. Gen. xvii. 1. *walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Psal. xxxvii. 3. *trust in Jehovah, and do good.* Luke xi. 28. *blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.* Acts xxiv. 14. *believing all things*—and v. 16. *herein do I exercise myself.* 2 Tim. i. 13. *hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and in love which is in Christ Jesus.* 1 Tim. i. 19. *holding faith and a good conscience.* Tit. iii. 8. *that they which have believed might be careful*—. 1 John iii. 23. *that we should believe and love.*

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## CHAP. II.

### OF GOD.

THOUGH there be not a few who deny the existence of God, *for the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*, Psal. xiv. 1. yet the Deity has imprinted upon the human mind so many

<sup>1</sup> *catechumen*: a convert or young person undergoing instruction before baptism into the early church.

unquestionable tokens of himself, and so many traces of him are apparent throughout the whole of nature, that no one in his senses can remain ignorant of the truth. Job xii. 9. *who knoweth not in all these that the hand of Jehovah hath wrought this?* Psal. xix. 1. *the heavens declare the glory of God.* Acts xiv. 17. *he left not himself without witness.* xvii. 27, 28. *he is not far from every one of us.* Rom. i. 19, 20. *that which may be known of God is manifest in them.* and ii. 14, 15. *the Gentiles . . . shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.* 1 Cor. i. 21. *after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* There can be no doubt but that every thing in the world, by the beauty of its order, and the evidence of a determinate and beneficial purpose which pervades it, testifies that some supreme efficient Power must have pre-existed, by which the whole was ordained for a specific end.

There are some who pretend that nature or fate is this supreme Power: but the very name of nature implies that it must owe its birth to some prior agent, or, to speak properly, signifies in itself nothing; but means either the essence of a thing, or that general law which is the origin of every thing, and under which every thing acts,—and fate can be nothing but a divine decree emanating from some almighty power.

Further, those who attribute the creation of every thing to nature, must necessarily associate chance with nature as a joint divinity; so that they gain nothing by this theory, except that in the place of that one God, whom they cannot tolerate, they are obliged, however reluctantly, to substitute two sovereign rulers of affairs, who must almost always be in opposition to each other. In short, many ocular demonstrations, many true predictions verified, many wonderful works have compelled all nations to believe, either that God, or that some evil power whose name was unknown, presided over the affairs of the world. Now that evil should prevail over good, and be the true supreme power, is as unmeet as it is incredible. Hence it follows as a necessary consequence, that God exists.

Again: the existence of God is further proved by that feeling, whether we term it conscience, or right reason, which even in the worst of characters is not altogether extinguished. If there were no God, there would be no distinction between right and wrong; the estimate of virtue and vice would entirely depend on the blind opinion of men; no one would follow virtue, no one would be restrained from vice by any sense of shame, or fear of the laws, unless conscience or right reason did from time to time convince every one, however unwilling, of the existence of God, the Lord and ruler of all things, to whom, sooner or later, each must give an account of his own actions, whether good or bad.

The whole tenor of Scripture proves the same thing; and the disciples of the doctrine of Christ may fairly be required to give assent to this truth in the first instance, according to the expression in Heb. xi. 6. *he that cometh to God, must believe that he is.* It is proved also by the dispersion of the ancient nation of the Jews throughout the whole world, according to what God often forewarned them would happen on account of their sins. Nor is it only to pay the penalty of their own guilt that they have been reserved in their scattered state, among the rest of the nations, through the revolution of successive ages, and even to the present day; but rather to be a perpetual and living testimony to all people under heaven, of the existence of God, and of the truth of the Holy Scriptures.

No one, however, can have right thoughts of God, with nature or reason alone as his guide, independent of the word, or message of God. Rom. x. 14. *how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

God is known, so far as he is pleased to make us acquainted with himself, either from his own nature, or from his efficient power.

When we speak of knowing God, it must be understood with reference to the imperfect comprehension of man; for to know God as he really is, far transcends the powers of man's thoughts, much more of his perception. 1 Tim. vi. 16. *dwell in the light which no man can approach unto.* God

therefore has made as full a revelation of himself as our minds can conceive, or the weakness of our nature can bear. *Exod. xxxiii. 20, 23. there shall no man see me, and live . . . but thou shalt see my back parts. Isai. vi. 1. I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. John i. 18. no man hath seen God at any time. vi. 46. not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. v. 37. ye have neither heard his voice at any time. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. we see through a glass, darkly . . . in part.*

Our safest way is to form in our minds such a conception of God, as shall correspond with his own delineation and representation of himself in the sacred writings. For granting that both in the literal and figurative descriptions of God, he is exhibited not as he really is, but in such a manner as may be within the scope of our comprehensions, yet we ought to entertain such a conception of him, as he, in condescending to accommodate himself to our capacities, has shewn that he desires we should conceive. For it is on this very account that he has lowered himself to our level, lest in our flights above the reach of human understanding, and beyond the written word of Scripture, we should be tempted to indulge in vague cogitations and subtleties.

There is no need then that theologians should have recourse here to what they call anthropopathy<sup>2</sup>—a figure invented by the grammarians to excuse the absurdities of the poets on the subject of the heathen divinities. We may be sure that sufficient care has been taken that the Holy Scriptures should contain nothing unsuitable to the character or dignity of God, and that God should say nothing of himself which could derogate from his own majesty. It is better therefore to contemplate the Deity, and to conceive of him, not with reference to human passions, that is, after the manner of men, who are never weary of forming subtle imaginations respecting him, but after the manner of Scripture, that is, in the way in which

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<sup>2</sup> *anthropopathy*: attribution of human passions to God. Cf. Introduction #112.

God has offered himself to our contemplation; nor should we think that he would say or direct anything to be written of himself, which is inconsistent with the opinion he wishes us to entertain of his character. Let us require no better authority than God himself for determining what is worthy or unworthy of him. If *it repented Jehovah that he had made man*, Gen. vi. 6. and *because of their groanings*, Judges ii. 18, let us believe that it did repent him, only taking care to remember that what is called repentance when applied to God, does not arise from inadvertency, as in men; for so he has himself cautioned us, Num. xxiii. 19. *God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent*. See also 1 Sam. xv. 29. Again, if *it grieved the Lord at his heart*, Gen. vi. 6. and if *his soul were grieved for the misery of Israel*, Judges x. 16, let us believe that it did grieve him. For the affections which in a good man are good, and rank with virtues, in God are holy. If after the work of six days it be said of God that *he rested and was refreshed*, Exod. xxxi. 17. if it be said that *he feared the wrath of the enemy*, Deut. xxxii. 27, let us believe that it is not beneath the dignity of God to grieve in that for which he is grieved, or to be refreshed in that which refresheth him, or to fear in that he feareth. For however we may attempt to soften down such expressions by a latitude of interpretation, when applied to the Deity, it comes in the end to precisely the same. If God be said *to have made man in his own image, after his likeness*, Gen. i. 26. and that too not only as to his soul, but also as to his outward form (unless the same words have different significations here and in chap. v. 3. *Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image*) and if God habitually assign to himself the members and form of man, why should we be afraid of attributing to him what he attributes to himself, so long as what is imperfection and weakness when viewed in reference to ourselves be considered as most complete and excellent whenever it is imputed to God. Questionless the glory and majesty of the Deity must have been so dear to him, that he would never say anything of himself which could be humiliating or degrading,

and would ascribe to himself no personal attribute which he would not willingly have ascribed to him by his creatures. Let us be convinced that those have acquired the truest apprehension of the nature of God who submit their understandings to his word; inasmuch as he has accommodated his word to their understandings, and has shown what he wishes their notion of the Deity should be.

To speak summarily, God either is, or is not, such as he represents himself to be. If he be really such, why should we think otherwise of him? If he be not such, on what authority do we say what God has not said? If at least it be his will that we should thus think of him, why does our imagination wander into some other conception? Why should we hesitate to conceive of God according to what he has not hesitated to declare explicitly respecting himself? For such knowledge of the Deity as was necessary for the salvation of man, he has himself of his goodness been pleased to reveal abundantly. Deut. xxix. 29. *the secret things belong unto Jehovah, but those things which are revealed belong unto us . . . that we may do them.*

In arguing thus, we do not say that God is in fashion like unto man in all his parts and members, but that as far as we are concerned to know, he is of that form which he attributes to himself in the sacred writings. If therefore we persist in entertaining a different conception of the Deity than that which it is to be presumed he desires should be cherished, inasmuch as he has himself disclosed it to us, we frustrate the purposes of God instead of rendering him submissive obedience. As if, forsooth, we wished to show that it was not we who had thought too meanly of God, but God who had thought too meanly of us.

It is impossible to comprehend accurately under any form of definition the *divine nature*, for so it is called, 2 Pet. i. 4. *that ye might be partakers of the divine nature*—though nature does not here signify essence, but the divine image, as in Gal. iv. 8. *which by nature are no Gods*, and θεοτῆς Col. ii. 9. θεοτῆς Rom. i. 20. τὸ θεῖον Acts xvii. 29. which words are

all translated *Godhead*. But though the nature of God cannot be defined, since he who has no efficient cause is essentially greatest of all, Isai. xxviii. 29. some description of it at least may be collected from his names and attributes.

The NAMES and ATTRIBUTES of God either show his nature, or his divine power and excellence. There are three names which seem principally to intimate the nature of God,—יהוה *Jehovah*—יהי *Jah*—אֶחֶי *Ehie*. Even the name of Jehovah was not forbidden to be pronounced, provided it was with due reverence. Exod. iii. 15. *Jehovah, God of your fathers . . . this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial.* xx. 7. *thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain.* Again, it occurs pronounced, 1 Kings xvii. 12. *as Jehovah thy God liveth,* and so in many other places. This name both in the New Testament and in the Greek version of the Old is always translated Κύριος—THE LORD,—probably for no other reason than because the word Jehovah could not be expressed in Greek letters. Its signification is, *he who is, or, which is, and which was, and which is to come,* Rev. i. 4. *Jah*, which is a sort of contraction of the former name, has the same signification. Exod. xvii. 16. *Jah hath sworn*—and in other places. Exod. iii. 14. אֶחֶי *Ehie, I am that I am, or will be;* and if the first person be changed into the third of the kindred verb, *Jave, who is, or will be,*—meaning the same as Jehovah, as some think, and more properly expressed thus than by the other words; but the name *Jave* appears to signify not only the existence of his nature, but also of his promises, or rather the completion of his promises; whence it is said, Exod. vi. 3. *by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.* And with what vowel points this name Jehovah ought to be pronounced, is shown by those proper names into the composition of which two of them enter, as Jehosaphat, Jehoram, Jehoiada, and the like. The third, or final vowel point may be supplied by analogy from the two other divine names, אֶחֶי and יהי.

I. The first of the attributes which show the inherent nature of God, is TRUTH. Jer. x. 10. *Jehovah is the true God.* John xvii. 3. *that they might know thee the only true*



*God.* 1 Thess. i. 9. *the living and true God.* 1 John v. 20. *that we may know him that is true.*

II. Secondly, God considered in his most simple nature is a SPIRIT. Exod. iii. 14, 15. *I am that I am.* Rom. xi. 36. *of him and through him are all things.* John iv. 24. *God is a spirit.* What a spirit is, or rather what it is not, is shown, Isai. xxxi. 3. *flesh, and not spirit.* Luke xxiv. 39. *a spirit hath not flesh and bones.* Whence it is evident that the essence of God, being in itself most simple, can admit no compound quality; so that the term *hypostasis* Heb. i. 3. which is differently translated *substance*, or *subsistence*, or *person*, can be nothing else but that most perfect essence by which God subsists by himself, in himself, and through himself. For neither *substance* nor *subsistence* make any addition to what is already a most perfect essence; and the word *person* in its later acceptation signifies any individual thing gifted with intelligence, while *hypostasis* denotes not the ens itself, but the essence of the ens in the abstract. Hypostasis, therefore, is clearly the same as essence, and thus many of the Latin commentators render it in the passage already quoted. Therefore, as God is a most simple essence, so is he also a most simple subsistence.

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Hitherto those attributes only have been mentioned which describe the nature of God, partly in an affirmative sense, partly negatively, as where they deny the existence of those imperfections in the Deity, which belong to created things,—as, for instance, when we speak of his immensity, his infinity, his incorruptibility. The succeeding attributes are such as show his divine power and excellence under the ideas of VITALITY, INTELLIGENCE and WILL.

I. VITALITY. Deut. xxxii. 40. *I live for ever*, whence he is called *the living God*. Psal. xlii. 2. and in many other passages. John v. 26. *the Father hath life in himself.*

II. The attribute of OMNISCIENCE refers to the INTELLIGENCE of God. Gen. vi. 5. *God saw . . . every imagination of the thoughts of his heart.* Gen. xviii. 14. *is anything too hard*

for Jehovah? 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. *Jehovah searcheth all hearts.* 2 Chron. vi. 30. *thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men.* Psal. xxxiii. 15. *he fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.* cxxxix. 2. *thou understandest my thought afar off.* v. 4. *for there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.* cxlvii. 5. *his understanding is infinite.* Job xi. 7–9. *canst thou by searching find out God? &c.* xxvi. 6. *hell is naked before him.* Prov. xv. 11. *hell and destruction are before Jehovah; how much more then the hearts of the children of men.* xvi. 2. *Jehovah weigheth the spirits.* xvii. 3. *Jehovah trieth the hearts.* Isai. xl. 28. *there is no searching of his understanding.* Jer. xvii. 10. *I Jehovah search the heart, I try the reins, whence, Acts i. 24. he is called the Lord which knoweth the hearts of all men.* Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. *am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off? can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?* Heb. iv. 13. *all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him, whence he is called the only wise, Dan. ii. 10. Rom. xvi. 27. 1 Tim. i. 17. So extensive is the prescience of God, that he knows beforehand the thoughts and actions of free agents as yet unborn, and many ages before those thoughts or actions have their origin.* Deut. xxxi. 16. *behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, &c.* v. 20, 21. *then will they turn unto other gods, &c. for I know the imagination which they go about even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear.* 2 Kings viii. 12. *I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel.*

III. With reference to the WILL, God is 1<sup>st</sup>. INFINITELY PURE AND HOLY. Exod. xv. 11. *glorious in holiness.* Josh. xxiv. 19. *he is an holy God.* 1 Sam. ii. 2. *there is none holy as Jehovah.* vi. 20. *before this holy God Jehovah.* Job xv. 15. *the heavens are not clean in his sight.* Isai. vi. 2, 3. *he covered his face . . . and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts.* xl. 25. *saith the Holy One.* xli. 20. *the Holy One of Israel.* Habak. i. 13. *thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil.*

2. He is MOST GRACIOUS. *Exod. xxxiv. 6. merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. See also Psal. lxxxvi. 15. and ciii. 8. v. 4. neither shall evil dwell with thee. xxv. 6: thy loving-kindnesses . . . have been ever of old. ciii. 11. great is his mercy toward them that fear him. v. 17. the mercy of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting. cxix. 63. thou art good, and doest good. Lam. iii. 22. it is of the mercies of Jehovah that we are not consumed. Matt. xix. 17. there is none good but one, that is, God. Luke vi. 36. be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful. 2 Cor. i. 3. the Father of mercies. Eph. ii. 4. rich in mercy. 1 John iv. 8. God is love.* And thus again God may be proved to be immutable, from the consideration of his infinite wisdom and goodness; since a being of infinite wisdom and goodness would neither wish to change an infinitely good state for another, nor would he be able to change it without contradicting his own attributes.

3. As God is true by nature, so is he also TRUE and FAITHFUL in respect of his will. *Psal. xix. 7. the testimony of Jehovah is sure. John vii. 28. he that sent me is true. Rom. iii. 4. let God be true, but every man a liar. 2 Tim. ii. 13. if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful. 1 Cor. i. 9. and x. 13. God is faithful. Rev. vi. 10. O Lord, holy and true.*

4. He is also JUST. *Deut. xxxii. 4. all his ways are judgement, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. Psal. xxxvi. 6. thy righteousness is like the great mountains. cxix. 137. righteous art thou, O Jehovah, and upright are thy judgements. Isai. v. 16. God . . . shall be sanctified in righteousness.* It is not requisite to discuss at large in this place what is consistent or inconsistent with the justice of God, since if it be necessary to say anything on so clear a subject, occasions will arise for introducing such observations as may be required in other parts of this work. Severity also is attributed to God. *Rom. xi. 22. on them which fell, severity.*

From all these attributes springs that infinite excellence of God which constitutes his true perfection, and causes him to abound in glory, and to be most deservedly and justly the

supreme Lord of all things, according to the qualities so frequently ascribed to him. Psal. xvi. 11. *in thy presence is fulness of joy.* civ. 1. *thou art clothed with honour and majesty.* Dan. vii. 10. *thousand thousands ministered unto him.* Matt. v. 48. *as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* 1 Tim. i. 11. *the blessed God.* vi. 15. *who is the blessed . . . potentate.*

Some description of this divine glory has been revealed, so far as it falls within the scope of human comprehension. Exod. xix. 18, &c. *mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke—* xxiv. 10, &c. *they saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.* xxxiii. 9, 10. *the cloudy pillar descended, &c. &c.—* and v. 18, &c. 1 Kings xix. 11. *behold, Jehovah passed by.* viii. 10, 11. *the cloud filled the house of Jehovah.* xxii. 19. *I saw Jehovah sitting on his throne.* Psal. xviii. 8, &c. and civ. Micah i. 3, &c. Nahum i. 3, &c. Isai. vi. Ezek. i. and viii. 1–3. and x. 1, &c. and xliii. 2, 3. Habak. iii. 3, &c. Dan. vii. 9. Rev. iv.

It follows, finally, that God must be styled by us WONDERFUL, and INCOMPREHENSIBLE. Judges xiii. 18. *why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?* Psal. cxlv. 3. *his greatness is unsearchable.* Isai. xl. 28. *there is no searching of his understanding.*

### CHAP. III.

#### OF THE DIVINE DECREES

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It follows, therefore, that the liberty of man must be considered entirely independent of necessity, and no admission can be made in favour of that modification of the principle which is founded on the doctrine of God's immutability and prescience. If there be any necessity at all, as has been stated before, it either determines free agents to a particular line of conduct, or it constrains them against their will, or it co-operates with them in conjunction with their will, or it is

altogether inoperative. If it determine free agents to a particular line of conduct, man will be rendered the natural cause of all his actions, and consequently of his sins, and formed as it were with an inclination for sinning. If it constrain them against their will, man who is subject to this compulsory decree will be rendered the cause of sins only *per accidens*,<sup>3</sup> God being the cause of sins *per se*.<sup>4</sup> If it co-operate with them in conjunction with their will, then God becomes either the principal or the joint cause of sins with man. If finally it be altogether inoperative, there is no such thing as necessity, it virtually destroys itself by being without operation. For it is wholly impossible that God should have decreed necessarily what we know at the same time to be in the power of man; or that that should be immutable which it remains for subsequent contingent circumstances either to fulfil or frustrate.

Whatever, therefore, was left to the free will of our first parents, could not have been decreed immutably or absolutely from all eternity; and questionless, either nothing was ever placed in man's power, or if it were, God cannot be said to have determined finally respecting it without reference to possible contingencies.

If it be objected, that this doctrine leads to absurd consequences, we reply, either the consequences are not absurd, or they are not the consequences of the doctrine. For it is neither impious nor absurd to say, that the idea of certain things or events might be suggested to God from some extraneous source; for since God had determined from all eternity, that man should so far be a free agent, that it remained with himself to decide whether he would stand or fall, the idea of that evil event, or of the fall of man, was suggested to God from an extraneous source,—a truth which all confess.

Nor does it follow from hence, that what is merely temporal becomes the cause of, or a restriction upon what is eternal, for it was not any thing temporal, but the wisdom of the eternal mind that gave occasion for framing the divine counsel.

<sup>3</sup> *per accidens*: accidentally, and so secondarily.

<sup>4</sup> *per se*: in himself, and so primarily

Whatever therefore was the subject of the divine counsel, whether man or angel who was to be gifted with free will, so that his fall might depend upon his own volition, such without doubt was the nature of the decree itself, so that all the evil consequences which ensued were contingent upon man's will; wherefore the covenant stood thus—if thou remain faithful, thou shalt abide in Paradise; if thou fall, thou shalt be cast out: if thou dost not eat the forbidden fruit, thou shalt live; if thou eat, thou shalt die.

Hence, those who contend that the liberty of actions is subject to an absolute decree, erroneously conclude that the decree of God is the cause of his foreknowledge and antecedent in order of time. If we must apply to God a phraseology borrowed from our own habits and understanding, that his decrees should have been the consequence of his foreknowledge seems more agreeable to reason, as well as to Scripture, and to the nature of God himself, who, as has just been proved, decreed every thing according to his infinite wisdom by virtue of his foreknowledge.

It is not intended to deny that the will of God is the first cause of all things, but we do not separate his prescience and wisdom from his will, much less do we think them subsequent to the latter in point of time. Finally, the will of God is not less the universal first cause, because he has himself decreed that some things should be left to our own free will, than if each particular event had been decreed necessarily.

To comprehend the whole matter in a few words, the sum of the argument may be thus stated in strict conformity with reason. God of his wisdom determined to create men and angels reasonable beings, and therefore free agents; at the same time he foresaw which way the bias of their will would incline, in the exercise of their own uncontrouled liberty. What then? shall we say that this foresight or foreknowledge on the part of God imposed on them the necessity of acting in any definite way? No more than if the future event had been foreseen by any human being. For what any human being has foreseen as certain to happen, will not less certainly happen than what

God himself has predicted. Thus Elisha foresaw how much evil Hazael would bring upon the children of Israel in the course of a few years, 2 Kings viii. 12. Yet no one would affirm that the evil took place necessarily on account of the foreknowledge of Elisha; for had he never foreknown it, the event would have occurred with equal certainty, through the free will of the agent. So neither does any thing happen because God has foreseen it; but he foresees the event of every action, because he is acquainted with their natural causes, which, in pursuance of his own decree, are left at liberty to exert their legitimate influence. Consequently the issue does not depend on God who foresees it, but on him alone who is the object of his foresight. Since therefore, as has before been shown, there can be no absolute decree of God regarding free agents, undoubtedly the prescience of the Deity (which can no more bias free agents than the prescience of man, that is, not at all, since the action in both cases is intransitive, and has no external influence,) can neither impose any necessity of itself, nor can it be considered at all the cause of free actions. If it be so considered, the very name of liberty must be altogether abolished as an unmeaning sound; and that not only in matters of religion, but even in questions of morality and indifferent things. There can be nothing but what will happen necessarily, since there is nothing but what is foreknown by God.

That this long discussion may be at length concluded by a brief summary of the whole matter, we must hold that God foreknows all future events, but that he has not decreed them all absolutely: lest all sin should be imputed to the Deity, and evil spirits and wicked men should be exempted from blame. Does my opponent avail himself of this, and think the concession enough to prove either that God does not foreknow every thing, or that all future events must therefore happen necessarily, because God has foreknown them? I allow that future events which God has foreseen, will happen certainly, but not of necessity. They will happen certainly, because the divine prescience cannot be deceived, but they will not happen necessarily, because prescience can have no influence on the

object foreknown, inasmuch as it is only an intransitive<sup>5</sup> action. What therefore is to happen according to contingency and the free will of man, is not the effect of God's prescience, but is produced by the free agency of its own natural causes, the future spontaneous inclination of which is perfectly known to God. Thus God foreknew that Adam would fall of his own free will; his fall therefore was certain, but not necessary, since it proceeded from his own free will, which is incompatible with necessity. Thus too God foreknew that the Israelites would revolt from the true worship to strange gods, Deut. xxxi. 16. If they were to be led to revolt necessarily on account of this prescience on the part of God, it was unjust to threaten them with the many evils which he was about to send upon them, ver. 17. it would have been to no purpose that a song was ordered to be written, which should be a witness for him against the children of Israel, because their sin would have been of necessity. But the prescience of God, like that of Moses, v. 27. had no extraneous influence, and God testifies, v. 16. that he foreknew they would sin from their own voluntary impulse, and of their own accord,—*this people will rise up, &c.* and v. 18. *I will surely hide my face in that day . . . in that they are turned unto other gods.* Now the revolt of the Israelites which subsequently took place, was not the consequence of God's foreknowledge of that event, but God foreknew that, although they were free agents, they would certainly revolt, owing to causes with which he was well acquainted. v. 20, 21. *when they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat, then will they turn unto other gods . . . I know their imagination which they go about, even now before I have brought them into the land which I swear.*

From what has been said it is sufficiently evident, that free causes are not impeded by any law of necessity arising from the decrees or prescience of God. There are some who in their zeal to oppose this doctrine, do not hesitate even to assert that God is himself the cause and origin of sin. Such men, if they

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<sup>5</sup> *intransitive*: not such as to pass from the actor to anyone or anything acted upon.



are not to be looked upon as misguided rather than mischievous, should be ranked among the most abandoned of all blasphemers. An attempt to refute them, would be nothing more than an argument to prove that God was not the evil spirit.

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## CHAP. IV.

### OF PREDESTINATION.<sup>6</sup>

THE principal SPECIAL DECREE of God RELATING TO MAN is termed PREDESTINATION, whereby GOD IN PITY TO MANKIND, THOUGH FORESEEING THAT THEY WOULD FALL OF THEIR OWN ACCORD, PREDESTINATED TO ETERNAL SALVATION BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD THOSE WHO SHOULD BELIEVE AND CONTINUE IN THE FAITH; FOR A MANIFESTATION OF THE GLORY OF HIS MERCY, GRACE, AND WISDOM, ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE IN CHRIST.

It has been the practice of the schools to use the word predestination, not only in the sense of election, but also of reprobation. This is not consistent with the caution necessary on so momentous a subject, since wherever it is mentioned in Scripture, election alone is uniformly intended. Rom. viii. 29, 30. *whom he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son . . . moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* I Cor. ii. 7. *the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.* Eph. i. 5. *having predestinated us unto the adoption.* v. 11. *in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to his purpose.* Acts ii. 23. compared with iv. 28. *him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God they have taken . . . for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done, namely, as a means of procuring the salvation of man.*

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Introduction #101 and 110.

IN PITY TO MANKIND, THOUGH FORESEEING THAT THEY WOULD FALL OF THEIR OWN ACCORD. It was not simply man as a being who was to be created, but man as a being who was to fall of his own accord, that was the matter or object of predestination; for that manifestation of divine grace and mercy which God designed as the ultimate purpose of predestination, presupposes the existence of sin and misery in man, originating from himself alone. It is universally admitted that the fall of man was not necessary; but if on the other hand the nature of the divine decree was such, that his fall became really inevitable,—which contradictory opinions are sometimes held in conjunction by the same persons,—then the restoration of man, who had fallen of necessity, became no longer a matter of grace, but of simple justice on the part of God. For if it be granted that he lapsed, though not against his own will, yet of necessity, it will be impossible not to think that the admitted necessity must have overruled or influenced his will by some secret force or guidance. But if God foresaw that man would fall of his own free will, there was no occasion for any decree relative to the fall itself, but only relative to the provision to be made for man, whose future fall was foreseen. Since then the apostacy of the first man was not decreed, but only foreknown by the infinite wisdom of God, it follows that predestination was not an absolute decree before the fall of man; and even after his fall, it ought always to be considered and defined as arising, not so much from a decree itself, as from the immutable conditions of a decree.

PREDESTINATED; that is, designated, elected: proposed to himself the salvation of man as the scope and end of his counsel. Hence may be refuted the notion of an abandonment and desertion from all eternity, in direct opposition to which God explicitly and frequently declares, as has been quoted above, that he desires not the death of any one, but the salvation of all; that he hates nothing that he has made; and that he has omitted nothing which might suffice for universal salvation.

FOR A MANIFESTATION OF THE GLORY OF HIS MERCY, GRACE, AND WISDOM. This is the chief end of predestination. Rom.

ix. 23. *that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy.* 1 Cor. ii. 7. *we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.* Eph. i. 6. *to the praise of the glory of his grace.*

ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE IN CHRIST. Eph. iii. 10, 11. *the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.* i. 4, 5. *he hath chosen us in him; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.* v. 11. *in him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to his purpose.* This is the source of that love of God, declared to us in Christ. John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.* Eph. ii. 4, 5. *for his great love wherewith he loved us . . . by grace ye are saved.* 1 John iv. 9, 10. *in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, &c.* Wherefore there was no grace decreed for man who was to fall, no mode of reconciliation with God, independently of the foreknown sacrifice of Christ; and since God has so plainly declared that predestination is the effect of his mercy, and love, and grace, and wisdom in Christ, it is to these qualities that we ought to attribute it, and not, as is generally done, to his absolute and secret will, even in those passages where mention is made of his will only. Exod. xxxiii. 19. *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,* that is, not to enter more largely into the causes of this graciousness at present, Rom. ix. 18. *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy,* by that method, namely, which he had appointed in Christ.

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For the grace of God is acknowledged to be infinite, in the first place, inasmuch as he showed any pity at all for man whose fall was to happen through his own fault. Secondly, because he *so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son* for its salvation. Thirdly, because he has again granted us the power of volition, that is, of acting freely, in consequence of recovering the liberty of the will by the renewing

of the Spirit. It was thus that he opened the heart of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14. But if the condition whereon the decree depends, that is to say, the will enfranchised by God himself, and faith which is required of mankind be left in the power of beings who are free agents, there is nothing in the doctrine either derogatory to grace, or inconsistent with justice; since the power of willing and believing is either the gift of God, or, so far as it is inherent in man, partakes not of the nature of merit or of good works, but only of a natural faculty. Nor does this reasoning represent God as depending upon the human will, but as fulfilling his own pleasure, whereby he has chosen that man should always use his own will with a regard to the love and worship of the Deity, and consequently with a regard to his own salvation. If this use of the will be not admitted, whatever worship or love we render to God is entirely vain and of no value; the acceptableness of duties done under a law of necessity is diminished, or rather is annihilated altogether, and freedom can no longer be attributed to that will over which some fixed decree is inevitably suspended.

The objections, therefore, which are so vehemently urged by some against this doctrine, are of no force whatever;—namely, that on this theory, the repentance and faith of the predestinated having been foreseen, predestination becomes posterior in point of time to works,—that it is rendered dependent on the will of man,—that God is defrauded of part of the glory of our salvation,—that man is puffed up with pride,—that the foundations of all Christian consolation in life and in death are shaken,—that gratuitous justification is denied. On the contrary, the scheme, and consequently the glory, not only of the divine grace, but also of the divine wisdom and justice, is thus displayed in a clearer manner than on the opposite hypothesis; which was the principal end that God proposed to himself in predestination.

Since then it is so clear that God has predestinated from eternity all those who should believe and continue in the faith, it follows that there can be no reprobation, except of those who do not believe or continue in the faith, and even this

rather as a consequence than a decree; there can therefore be no reprobation of individuals from all eternity. For God has predestinated to salvation, on the proviso of a general condition, all who enjoy freedom of will; while none are predestinated to destruction, except through their own fault, and as it were *per accidens*, in the same manner as there are some to whom the gospel itself is said to be a stumbling-block and a savour of death. Of this assertion proof shall be given from the testimony of Scripture no less explicit than of the doctrine asserted in the former part of the chapter. Isai. l. 1. *where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? . . . behold for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves.* Hos. iv. 6. *because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee . . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.* Rev. xiii. 8. *all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* And who are they but such as have not believed? whom God has therefore deserted because they *wandered after the beast*, v. 3. Nor should I call the decree mentioned in Zephaniah ii. 1-3. a decree of eternal reprobation, but rather of temporal punishment, and at any rate not an absolute decree, as the passage itself is sufficient to show: *gather yourselves together, &c. before the decree bring forth . . . &c. &c. it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the anger of Jehovah.*

For if God had decreed any to absolute reprobation, which we do not read, he must, even according to their system who affirm that reprobation is an absolute decree, have likewise decreed the means without which his own decree could not be fulfilled. Now these means are neither more nor less than sin. Nor will the common subterfuge avail, namely, that God did not decree sin, but only its permission: this is a contradiction in terms; for at this rate he does more than simply permit it: he who permits a thing does not decree it, but leaves it free.

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Whoever has paid attention to what has been urged, will easily perceive that the difficulties respecting this doctrine have

arisen from the want of making the proper distinction between the punishment of hardening the heart and the decree of reprobation; according to Prov. xix. 3. *the foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against Jehovah.* For such do in effect impugn the justice of God, however vehemently they may disclaim the intention; and might justly be reproved in the words of the heathen Homer:

Αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο. *Odyss.* I. 7.<sup>7</sup>

And again, in the person of Jupiter:

᾽Ω πόποι, οἶον δὴ νῦ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιώωνται!  
 ἐξ ἡμέων γὰρ φασὶ κάκ' ἔμμεναι. οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ  
 σφῆσιν ἀτασθαλίησιν, ὑπὲρ μόνον, ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν.

*Odyss.* I. 32.<sup>8</sup>

## CHAP. V.

### PREFATORY REMARKS.

I CANNOT enter upon subjects of so much difficulty as the SON OF GOD and the HOLY SPIRIT, without again premising a few introductory words. If indeed I were a member of the Church of Rome, which requires implicit obedience to its creed on all points of faith, I should have acquiesced from education or habit in its simple decree and authority, even though it denies that the doctrine of the Trinity, as now received, is capable of being proved from any passage

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... they perish'd self-destroy'd  
 By their own fault.

(Book I, 9.)

(Pope's translation. Sumner's note.)

Perverse mankind! whose wills, created free,  
 Charge all their woes on absolute decree:  
 All to the dooming gods their guilt translate,  
 And follies are miscall'd the crimes of fate.

(Pope's translation. Sumner's note.)

Cf. *Doctrine of Divorce* II, iii, note 6.

of Scripture. But since I enrol myself among the number of those who acknowledge the word of God alone as the rule of faith, and freely advance what appears to me much more clearly deducible from the Holy Scriptures than the commonly received opinion, I see no reason why any one who belongs to the same Protestant or Reformed Church, and professes to acknowledge the same rule of faith as myself, should take offence at my freedom, particularly as I impose my authority on no one, but merely propose what I think more worthy of belief than the creed in general acceptance. I only entreat that my readers will ponder and examine my statements in a spirit which desires to discover nothing but the truth, and with a mind free from prejudice. For without intending to oppose the authority of Scripture, which I consider inviolably sacred, I only take upon myself to refute human interpretations as often as the occasion requires, conformably to my right, or rather to my duty as a man. If indeed those with whom I have to contend were able to produce direct attestation from heaven to the truth of the doctrine which they espouse, it would be nothing less than impiety to venture to raise, I do not say a clamour, but so much as a murmur against it. But inasmuch as they can lay claim to nothing more than human powers, assisted by that spiritual illumination which is common to all, it is not unreasonable that they should on their part allow the privileges of diligent research and free discussion to another inquirer, who is seeking truth through the same means and in the same way as themselves, and whose desire of benefiting mankind is equal to their own.

In reliance, therefore, upon the divine assistance, let us now enter upon the subject itself.

#### OF THE SON OF GOD.<sup>9</sup>

Hitherto I have considered the INTERNAL EFFICIENCY of God, as shown in his decrees.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Introduction #108-9.

HIS EXTERNAL EFFICIENCY, or the execution of his decrees, whereby he carries into effect by external agency whatever decrees he has purposed within himself, may be comprised under the heads of GENERATION, CREATION, and the GOVERNMENT OF THE UNIVERSE.

First, GENERATION, whereby God, in pursuance of his decree, has begotten his only Son; whence he chiefly derives his appellation of Father.

Generation must be an external efficiency, since the Father and Son are different persons; and the divines themselves acknowledge this, who argue that there is a certain emanation of the Son from the Father (which will be explained when the doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit is under examination); for though they teach that the Spirit is co-essential with the Father, they do not deny that it emanates, and goes out, and proceeds, and is breathed from the Father,—which are all expressions denoting external efficiency. In conjunction with this doctrine they hold that the Son is also co-essential with the Father, and generated from all eternity. Hence this question, which is naturally very obscure, becomes involved in still greater difficulties if the received opinion respecting it be followed; for though the Father be said in Scripture to have begotten the Son in a double sense, the one literal, with reference to the production of the Son, the other metaphorical, with reference to his exaltation, many commentators have applied the passages which allude to the exaltation and mediatorial functions of Christ as proofs of his generation from all eternity. They have indeed this excuse for their proceeding, if any excuse can be offered in such a case, that it was impossible to find a single text in all Scripture to prove the eternal generation of the Son. This point appears certain, notwithstanding the arguments of some of the moderns to the contrary, that the Son existed in the beginning, under the name of the *logos* or word, and was the first of the whole creation, by whom afterwards all other things were made both in heaven and earth. John i. 1–3. *in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, &c.* xvii. 5. *and now, O*



*Father, glorify me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* Col. i. 15, 18. *the first-born of every creature.* Rev. iii. 14. *the beginning of the creation of God.* 1 Cor. viii. 6. *Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.* Eph. iii. 9. *who created all things by Jesus Christ.* Col. i. 16. *all things were created by him and for him.* Heb. i. 2. *by whom also he made the worlds,* whence it is said, v. 10, *thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth;* on which point more will be said in the seventh Chapter, on the Creation.

All these passages prove the existence of the Son before the world was made, but they conclude nothing respecting his generation from all eternity. The other texts which are produced relate only to his metaphorical generation, that is, to his resurrection from the dead, or to his unction to the mediatorial office, according to St. Paul's own interpretation of the second Psalm: *I will declare the decree; Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee*—which the apostle thus explains, Acts xiii. 32, 33. *God hath fulfilled the promise unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.* Rom. i. 4. *declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.* Hence, Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 4. *the first begotten of the dead.* Heb. i. 5, speaking of the exaltation of the Son above the angels; *for unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.* Again, v. 5, 6, with reference to the priesthood of Christ; *so also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee: as he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever, &c.* Further, it will be apparent from the second Psalm, that God has begotten the Son, that is, has made him a king: v. 6. *yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Sion;* and then in the next verse, after having anointed his King, whence the name of *Christ* is derived, he

says, *this day have I begotten thee*. Heb. i. 4, 5. *being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*. No other name can be intended but that of Son, as the following verse proves: *for unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee?* The Son also declares the same of himself. John x. 35, 36. *say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?* By a similar figure of speech, though in a much lower sense, the saints are also said to be begotten of God.

It is evident however upon a careful comparison and examination of all these passages, and particularly from the whole of the second Psalm, that however the generation of the Son may have taken place, it arose from no natural necessity, as is generally contended, but was no less owing to the decree and will of the Father than his priesthood or kingly power, or his resuscitation from the dead. Nor does this form any objection to his bearing the title of begotten, in whatever sense that expression is to be understood, or of God's *own Son*, Rom. viii. 32. For he is called the *own Son of God* merely because he had no other Father besides God, whence he himself said, that *God was his Father*, John v. 18. For to Adam God stood less in the relation of Father, than of Creator, having only formed him from the dust of the earth; whereas he was properly the Father of the Son made of his own substance. Yet it does not follow from hence that the Son is co-essential with the Father, for then the title of Son would be least of all applicable to him, since he who is properly the Son is not coeval with the Father, much less of the same numerical essence, otherwise the Father and the Son would be one person; nor did the Father beget him from any natural necessity, but of his own free will,—a mode more perfect and more agreeable to the paternal dignity; particularly since the Father is God, all whose works, as has been already proved from Scripture, are executed freely according to his own good pleasure, and consequently the work of generation.

For questionless, it was in God's power consistently with the perfection of his own essence not to have begotten the Son, inasmuch as generation does not pertain to the nature of the Deity, who stands in no need of propagation; but whatever does not pertain to his own essence or nature, he does not effect like a natural agent from any physical necessity. If the generation of the Son proceeded from a physical necessity, the Father impaired himself by physically begetting a co-equal; which God could no more do than he could deny himself; therefore the generation of the Son cannot have proceeded otherwise than from a decree, and of the Father's own free will.

Thus the Son was begotten of the Father in consequence of his decree, and therefore within the limits of time, for the decree itself must have been anterior to the execution of the decree, as is sufficiently clear from the insertion of the word *today*. Nor can I discover on what passage of Scripture the assertors of the eternal generation of the Son ground their opinion, for the text in Micah v. 2. does not speak of his generation, but of his works, which are only said to have been wrought *from of old*. But this will be discussed more at large hereafter.

The Son is also called *only begotten*. John i. 14. *and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father*. v. 18. *the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father*. iii. 16, 18. *he gave his only begotten Son*. 1 John iv. 9. *God sent his only begotten Son*. Yet he is not called essentially one with the Father, inasmuch as he was visible to sight, and given by the Father, by whom also he was sent, and from whom he proceeded; but he enjoys the title of only begotten by way of superiority, as distinguished from many others who are also said to have been born of God. John i. 13. *which were born of God*. 1 John iii. 9. *whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin*. James i. 18. *of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*. 1 John v. 1. *whosoever believeth, &c. is born of God*. 1 Pet. i. 3. *which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope*. But since throughout the Scriptures the Son is never said to

be begotten, except, as above, in a metaphorical sense, it seems probable that he is called *only begotten* principally because he is the one mediator between God and man.

So also the Son is called the *first born*. Rom. viii. 29. *that he might be the first born among many brethren*. Col. i. 15. *the first born of every creature*. v. 18. *the first born from the dead*. Heb. i. 6. *when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world*. Rev. iii. 14. *the beginning of the creation of God*,—all which passages preclude the idea of his co-essentiality with the Father, and of his generation from all eternity. Thus it is said of Israel, Exod. iv. 22. *thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, even my first born*; and of Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 9. *Ephraim is my first born*; and of all the saints, Heb. xii. 23. *to the general assembly of the first born*.

Hitherto only the metaphorical generation of Christ has been considered; but since to generate another who had no previous existence, is to give him being, and that if God generate by a physical necessity, he can generate nothing but a co-equal Diety, which would be inconsistent with self-existence, an essential attribute of Divinity; (so that according to the one hypothesis there would be two infinite Gods, or according to the other the *first* or *efficient cause* would become the *effect*, which no man in his senses will admit) it becomes necessary to inquire how or in what sense God the Father can have begotten the Son. This point also will be easily explained by reference to Scripture. For when the Son is said to be *the first born of every creature*, and *the beginning of the creation of God*, nothing can be more evident than that God of his own will created, or generated, or produced the Son before all things, endued with the divine nature, as in the fulness of time he miraculously begat him in his human nature of the Virgin Mary. The generation of the divine nature is described by no one with more sublimity and copiousness than by the apostle to the Hebrews, i. 2, 3. *whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, &c.* It must be understood from this, that God imparted to

the Son as much as he pleased of the divine nature, nay of the divine substance itself, care being taken not to confound the substance with the whole essence, which would imply, that the Father had given to the Son what he retained numerically the same himself; which would be a contradiction of terms instead of a mode of generation. This is the whole that is revealed concerning the generation of the Son of God. Whoever wishes to be wiser than this, becomes foiled in his pursuit after wisdom, entangled in the deceitfulness of vain philosophy, or rather of sophistry, and involved in darkness.

Since, however, Christ not only bears the name of the only begotten Son of God, but is also several times called in Scripture God, notwithstanding the universal doctrine that there is but one God, it appeared to many, who had no mean opinion of their own acuteness, that there was an inconsistency in this; which gave rise to an hypothesis no less strange than repugnant to reason, namely, that the Son, although personally and numerically another, was yet essentially one with the Father, and that thus the unity of God was preserved.

But unless the terms unity and duality be signs of the same ideas to God which they represent to men, it would have been to no purpose that God had so repeatedly inculcated that first commandment, that he was the one and only God, if another could be said to exist besides, who also himself ought to be believed in as the one God. Unity and duality cannot consist of one and the same essence. God is one ens, not two; one essence and one subsistence, which is nothing but a substantial essence, appertain to one ens; if two subsistences or two persons be assigned to one essence, it involves a contradiction of terms, by representing the essence as at once simple and compound. If one divine essence be common to two persons, that essence or divinity will either be in the relation of a whole to its several parts, or of a genus to its several species, or lastly of a common subject to its accidents. If none of these alternatives be conceded, there is no mode of escaping from the absurd consequences that follow, such as that one essence may be the third part of two or more.

There would have been no occasion for the supporters of these opinions to have offered such violence to reason, nay even to so much plain scriptural evidence, if they had duly considered God's own words addressed to kings and princes, Psal. lxxxii. 6. *I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High*; or those of Christ himself, John x. 35. *if he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken*—; or those of St. Paul, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. *for though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or earth, (for there be gods many and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, &c.* or lastly of St. Peter, ii. 1, 4. *that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature*, which implies much more than the title of gods in the sense in which that title is applied to kings; though no one would conclude from this expression that the saints were co-essential with God.

Let us then discard reason in sacred matters, and follow the doctrine of Holy Scripture exclusively. Accordingly, no one need expect that I should here premise a long metaphysical discussion, and introduce all that commonly received drama of the personalities in the Godhead: since it is most evident, in the first place, from numberless passages of Scripture, that there is in reality but one true independent and supreme God; and as he is called one, (inasmuch as human reason and the common language of mankind, and the Jews, the people of God, have always considered him as one person only, that is, one in a numerical sense) let us have recourse to the sacred writings in order to know who this one true and supreme God is. This knowledge ought to be derived in the first instance from the gospel, since the clearest doctrine respecting the one God must necessarily be that copious and explanatory revelation concerning him which was delivered by Christ himself to his apostles, and by the apostles to their followers. Nor is it to be supposed that the gospel would be ambiguous or obscure on this subject; for it was not given for the purpose of promulgating new and incredible doctrines respecting the nature of God, hitherto utterly unheard of by his own people, but to announce salva-

tion to the Gentiles through Messiah the Son of God, according to the promise of the God of Abraham. *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John i. 18. Let us therefore consult the Son in the first place respecting God.

According to the testimony of the Son, delivered in the clearest terms, the Father is that one true God, by whom are all things. Being asked by one of the scribes, Mark xii. 28, 29, 32. which was the first commandment of all, he answered from Deut. vi. 4. *the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord*; or as it is in the Hebrew, *Jehovah our God is one Jehovah*. The scribe assented; *there is one God, and there is none other one but he*; and in the following verse Christ expresses his approbation of this answer. Nothing can be more clear than that it was the opinion of the scribe, as well as of the other Jews, that by the unity of God is intended his oneness of person. That this God was no other than God the Father, is proved from John viii. 41, 54. *we have one Father, even God. It is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say that he is your God*. iv. 21. *neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father*. Christ therefore agrees with the whole people of God, that the Father is that one and only God. For who can believe that the very first of the commandments would have been so obscure, and so ill understood by the Church through such a succession of ages, that two other persons, equally entitled to worship, should have remained wholly unknown to the people of God, and debarred of divine honours even to that very day? especially as God, where he is teaching his own people respecting the nature of their worship under the gospel, forewarns them that they would have for their God the one Jehovah whom they had always served, and David, that is, Christ, for their King and Lord. Jer. xxx. 9. *they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them*. In this passage Christ, such as God willed that he should be known or served by his people under the gospel, is expressly distinguished from the one God Jehovah,

both by nature and title. Christ himself therefore, the Son of God, teaches us nothing in the gospel respecting the one God but what the law had before taught, and everywhere clearly asserts him to be his Father. John xvii. 3. *this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* xx. 17. *I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God:* if therefore the Father be the God of Christ, and the same be our God, and if there be none other God but one, there can be no God beside the Father.

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## CHAP. VII.

### OF THE CREATION.

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It is clear then that the world was framed out of matter<sup>10</sup> of some kind or other. For since action and passion are relative terms, and since, consequently, no agent can act externally, unless there be some patient, such as matter, it appears impossible that God could have created this world out of nothing; not from any defect of power on his part, but because it was necessary that something should have previously existed capable of receiving passively the exertion of the divine efficacy. Since, therefore, both Scripture and reason concur in pronouncing that all these things were made, not out of nothing, but out of matter, it necessarily follows, that matter must either have always existed independently of God, or have originated from God at some particular point of time. That matter should have been always independent of God, (seeing that it is only a passive principle, dependent on the Deity, and subservient to him; and seeing, moreover, that, as in number, considered abstractedly, so also in time or eternity there is no inherent force or efficacy) that matter, I say, should have

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Introduction #99.



existed of itself from all eternity, is inconceivable. If on the contrary it did not exist from all eternity, it is difficult to understand from whence it derives its origin. There remains, therefore, but one solution of the difficulty, for which moreover we have the authority of Scripture, namely, that all things are of God. Rom. xi. 36. *for of him, and through him, and to him are all things.* 1 Cor. viii. 6. *there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things:* where the same Greek preposition is used in both cases. Heb. ii. 11. *for both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one.*

In the first place, there are, as is well known to all, four kinds of causes,—*efficient, material, formal, and final.* Inasmuch then as God is the primary, and absolute, and sole cause of all things, there can be no doubt but that he comprehends and embraces within himself all the causes above-mentioned. Therefore the material cause must be either God, or nothing. Now nothing is no cause at all; and yet it is contended that forms, and above all, that human forms,<sup>11</sup> were created out of nothing. But matter and form, considered as internal causes, constitute the thing itself; so that either all things must have had two causes only, and those external, or God will not have been the perfect and absolute cause of every thing. Secondly, it is an argument of supreme power and goodness, that such diversified, multiform, and inexhaustible virtue should exist and be *substantially* inherent in God (for that virtue cannot be *accidental* which admits of degrees, and of augmentation or remission, according to his pleasure) and that this diversified and substantial virtue should not remain dormant within the Deity, but should be diffused and propagated and extended as far and in such manner as he himself may will. For the original matter of which we speak, is not to be looked upon as an evil or trivial thing, but as intrinsically good, and the chief productive stock of every subsequent good. It was a substance, and derivable from no other source than from the fountain of every substance, though at first confused

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Introduction #3.

and formless, being afterwards adorned and digested into order by the hand of God.

Those who are dissatisfied because, according to this view, substance was imperfect, must also be dissatisfied with God for having originally produced it out of nothing in an imperfect state, and without form. For what difference does it make, whether God produced it in this imperfect state out of nothing, or out of himself? By this reasoning, they only transfer that imperfection to the divine efficiency, which they are unwilling to admit can properly be attributed to substance considered as an efflux of the Deity. For why did not God create all things out of nothing in an absolutely perfect state at first? It is not true, however, that matter was in its own nature originally imperfect; it merely received embellishment from the accession of forms, which are themselves material. And if it be asked how what is corruptible can proceed from incorruption, it may be asked in return how the virtue and efficacy of God can proceed out of nothing. Matter, like the form and nature of the angels itself, proceeded incorruptible from God; and even since the fall it remains incorruptible as far as concerns its essence.

But the same, or even a greater difficulty still remains—how that which is in its nature peccable can have proceeded (if I may so speak) from God? I ask in reply, how anything peccable can have originated from the virtue and efficacy which proceeded from God? Strictly speaking indeed it is neither matter nor form that sins; and yet having proceeded from God, and become in the power of another party, what is there to prevent them, inasmuch as they have now become mutable, from contracting taint and contamination through the enticements of the devil, or those which originate in man himself? It is objected, however, that body cannot emanate from spirit. I reply, much less then can body emanate from nothing. For spirit being the more excellent substance, virtually and essentially contains within itself the inferior one; as the spiritual and rational faculty contains the corporeal, that is, the sentient and vegetative faculty. For not even divine virtue and

efficiency could produce bodies out of nothing, according to the commonly received opinion, unless there had been some bodily power in the substance of God; since no one can give to another what he does not himself possess. Nor did St. Paul hesitate to attribute to God something corporeal; Col. ii. 9. *in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* Neither is it more incredible that a bodily power should issue from a spiritual substance, than that what is spiritual should arise from body; which nevertheless we believe will be the case with our own bodies at the resurrection. Nor, lastly, can it be understood in what sense God can properly be called infinite, if he be capable of receiving any accession whatever; which would be the case if anything could exist in the nature of things, which had not first been of God and in God.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAP. X.

### OF THE SPECIAL GOVERNMENT OF MAN BEFORE THE FALL, INCLUDING

#### THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE SABBATH AND OF MARRIAGE.

THE Providence of God as regards mankind, relates to man either in his state of rectitude, or since his fall.

With regard to that which relates to man in his state of rectitude, God, having placed him in the garden of Eden, and furnished him with whatever was calculated to make life happy, commanded him, as a test of his obedience, to refrain from eating of the single tree of knowledge of good and evil, under penalty of death if he should disregard the injunction. Gen. i. 28. *subdue the earth, and have dominion—* ii. 15–17. *he put him into the garden of Eden . . . of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat; but in the day that thou eatest*

*of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt surely die.*

This is sometimes called *the covenant of works*, though it does not appear from any passage of Scripture to have been either a covenant, or of works. No works whatever are required of Adam; a particular act only is forbidden. It was necessary that something should be forbidden or commanded as a test of fidelity, and that an act in its own nature indifferent, in order that man's obedience might be thereby manifested. For since it was the disposition of man to do what was right, as a being naturally good and holy, it was not necessary that he should be bound by the obligation of a covenant to perform that to which he was of himself inclined; nor would he have given any proof of obedience by the performance of works to which he was led by a natural impulse, independently of the divine command. Not to mention, that no command, whether proceeding from God or from a magistrate, can properly be called a covenant, even where rewards and punishments are attached to it; but rather an exercise of jurisdiction.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil was not a sacrament, as it is generally called; for a sacrament is a thing to be used, not abstained from: but a pledge, as it were, and memorial of obedience.

It was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil from the event; for since Adam tasted it, we not only know evil, but we know good only by means of evil. For it is by evil that virtue is chiefly exercised, and shines with greater brightness.

The tree of life, in my opinion, ought not to be considered so much a sacrament, as a symbol of eternal life, or rather perhaps the nutriment by which that life is sustained. Gen. iii. 22. *lest he take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.* Rev. ii. 7. *to him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life.*

Seeing, however, that man was made in the image of God, and had the whole law of nature so implanted and innate in him, that he needed no precept to enforce its observance, it

follows, that if he received any additional commands, whether respecting the tree of knowledge, or the institution of marriage, these commands formed no part of the law of nature, which is sufficient of itself to teach whatever is agreeable to right reason, that is to say, whatever is intrinsically good. Such commands must therefore have been founded on what is called positive right, whereby God, or any one invested with lawful power, commands or forbids what is in itself neither good nor bad, and what therefore would not have been obligatory on any one, had there been no law to enjoin or prohibit it. With regard to the Sabbath, it is clear that God hallowed it to himself, and dedicated it to rest, in remembrance of the consummation of his work; Gen. ii. 2, 3. Exod. xxxi. 17. Whether its institution was ever made known to Adam, or whether any commandment relative to its observance was given previous to the delivery of the law on Mount Sinai, much less whether any such was given before the fall of man, cannot be ascertained, Scripture being silent on the subject.

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## CHAP. XI.

### OF THE FALL OF OUR FIRST PARENTS,<sup>12</sup> AND OF SIN.

THE Providence of God as regards the fall of man, is observable in the sin of man, and the misery consequent upon it, as well as in his restoration.

SIN, as defined by the apostle, is *ἀνομία*, or *the transgression of the law*, 1 John iii. 4.

By the law is here meant, in the first place, that rule of conscience which is innate, and engraven upon the mind of man; secondly, the special command which proceeded out of the

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Introduction #110-2.

mouth of God, (for the law written by Moses was long subsequent) Gen. ii. 17. *thou shalt not eat of it.* Hence it is said, Rom. ii. 12. *as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law.*

Sin is distinguished into THAT WHICH IS COMMON TO ALL MEN, and THE PERSONAL SIN OF EACH INDIVIDUAL.

THE SIN WHICH IS COMMON TO ALL MEN IS THAT WHICH OUR FIRST PARENTS, AND IN THEM ALL THEIR POSTERITY COMMITTED, WHEN, CASTING OFF THEIR OBEDIENCE TO GOD, THEY TASTED THE FRUIT OF THE FORBIDDEN TREE.

OUR FIRST PARENTS. Gen. iii. 6. *the woman took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.* Hence 1 Tim. ii. 14. *Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression.* This sin originated, first, in the instigation of the devil, as is clear from the narrative in Gen. iii. and from 1 John iii. 8. *he that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.* Secondly, in the liability to fall with which man was created, whereby he, as the devil had done before him, *abode not in the truth,* John viii. 44. *nor kept his first estate, but left his own habitation,* Jude 6. If the circumstances of this crime are duly considered, it will be acknowledged to have been a most heinous offence, and a transgression of the whole law. For what sin can be named, which was not included in this one act? It comprehended at once distrust in the divine veracity, and a proportionate credulity in the assurances of Satan; unbelief; ingratitude; disobedience; gluttony; in the man excessive uxoriousness, in the woman a want of proper regard for her husband, in both an insensibility to the welfare of their offspring, and that offspring the whole human race; parricide, theft, invasion of the rights of others, sacrilege, deceit, presumption in aspiring to divine attributes, fraud in the means employed to attain the object, pride, and arrogance. Whence it is said, Eccles. vii. 29. *God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.* James ii. 10. *whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

AND IN THEM ALL THEIR POSTERITY; for even such as were not then born are judged and condemned in them, Gen. iii. 16, &c. so that without doubt they also sinned in them, and at the same time with them. Rom. v. 12. *by one man sin entered into the world.* v. 15. *through the offence of one many be dead;* and v. 16. *the judgement was by one to condemnation;* v. 17. *by one man's offence death reigned by one;* and v. 18. *by the offence of one man judgement came upon all men to condemnation;* and v. 19. *by one man's disobedience many were made sinners.* 1 Cor. xv. 22. *in Adam all die;* undoubtedly therefore all sinned in Adam. For Adam being the common parent and head of all, it follows that, as in the covenant, that is, in receiving the commandment of God, so also in the defection from God, he either stood or fell for the whole human race; in the same manner as *Levi also payed tithes in Abraham, whilst he was yet in the loins of his father,* Heb. vii. 9, 10. *he hath made of one blood all nations of men,* Acts xvii. 26. For if all did not sin in Adam, why has the condition of all become worse since his fall? Some of the modern commentators reply, that the deterioration was not moral, but physical. To which I answer, that it was as unjust to deprive the innocent of their physical, as of their moral perfection; especially since the former has so much influence on the latter, that is, on the practical conduct of mankind.

It is, however, a principle uniformly acted upon in the divine proceedings, and recognized by all nations and under all religions from the earliest period, that the penalty incurred by the violation of things sacred (and such was the tree of knowledge of good and evil) attaches not only to the criminal himself, but to the whole of his posterity, who thus become accursed and obnoxious to punishment. It was thus in the deluge, and in the destruction of Sodom; in the swallowing up of Korah, Numb. xvi. 27-32. and in the punishment of Achan, Josh. vii. 24, 25. In the burning of Jericho the children suffered for the sins of their fathers, and even the cattle were devoted to the same slaughter with their masters, Josh. vi. 21. A like fate befel the posterity of Eli the priest, 1 Sam. ii. 31, 33, 36. and

the house of Saul, 2 Sam. xxi. 1, &c. because their father had slain the Gibeonites.

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## CHAP. XXVII.

### OF THE GOSPEL AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

\* \* \* \* \*

It appears therefore as well from the evidence of Scripture, as from the arguments above adduced, that the whole of the Mosaic law is abolished by the gospel. It is to be observed, however, that the sum and essence of the law is not hereby abrogated; its purpose being attained in that love of God and our neighbour, which is born of the Spirit through faith. It was with justice therefore that Christ asserted the permanence of the law, Matt. v. 17. *think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the phophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* Rom. iii. 31. *do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.* viii. 4. *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Hence we are freed from the yoke of human judgements, much more of civil decrees and penalties in religious matters. Rom. xiv. 4. *who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.*, v. 8. *whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.* Matt. vii. 1. *judge not, that ye be not judged.* Rom. xiv. 10. *why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ.* If we are forbidden to judge (or condemn) our brethren respecting matters of religion or conscience in common discourse, how much more in a court of law, which has confessedly no jurisdiction here; since Paul refers all such matters to the judgement-seat of Christ, not of man? James ii. 12. *so speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty; namely, by God, not by fallible men in things appertaining to religion; wherein*



if he will judge us according to the law of liberty, why should man prejudge us according to the law of bondage?

\* \* \* \* \*

Christ was not deterred by the fear of giving offence to the Pharisees, from defending the practice of his disciples in eating bread with unwashen hands, Matt. xv. 2, 3. and plucking the ears of corn, which it was considered unlawful to do on the sabbath-day, Luke vi. 1, &c. Nor would he have suffered a woman of condition to anoint his feet with precious ointment, and to wipe them with her hair, still less would he have vindicated and praised the action, John xii. 3, &c. neither would he have availed himself of the good offices and kindness of the women who ministered unto him whithersoever he went, if it were necessary on all occasions to satisfy the unreasonable scruples of malicious or envious persons. Nay, we must withstand the opinions of the brethren themselves, if they are influenced by motives unworthy of the gospel. Gal. ii. 11, &c. *when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.* Nor ought the weak believer to judge rashly of the liberty of a Christian brother whose faith is stronger than his own, but rather to give himself up to be instructed with the more willingness. Rom. xiv. 13. *let us not therefore judge one another any more.*

Neither this reason, therefore, nor a pretended consideration for the weaker brethren, afford a sufficient warrant for those edicts of the magistrate which constrain believers, or deprive them in any respect of their religious liberty. For so the apostle argues 1 Cor. ix. 19. *though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all;* I was not made so by others, but became so of my own accord; *free from all men,* and consequently from the magistrate, in these matters at least. When the magistrate takes away this liberty, he takes away the gospel itself; he deprives the good and the bad indiscriminately of their privilege of free judgement, contrary to the spirit of the well known precept, Matt. xiii. 29, 30. *lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up also the wheat with them: let both grow together until the harvest.*

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